

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 360

MONDAY DECEMBER 29, 2008

www.saipantribune.com 50¢



POLL RESULTS

Would you favor the use of nuclear energy as an energy source in the CNMI if it were shown to be safe?

Yes-32

No-32

Sunday, December 28, 2008

90 without a government budget for FY 2009
DAYS

INSIDE

Power Outage

Obama's Hawaiian vacation was darkened for 11 hours when a power outage enveloped Oahu.

NATION...Page 15



Marley & Me

Twentieth Century Fox says "Marley & Me" has set a Christmas Day record with \$14.75 million at the box office.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 21



By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Despite the Department of Labor creating a new website and adding new processing equipment and software in an effort to make jobs searches and registration easier for employees and em-

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

File photo shows Labor Division director Barry Hirshbein and a Labor Department employee demonstrating the new processing equipment and software implemented at the department.

ployers, Employment Services is on par to place only

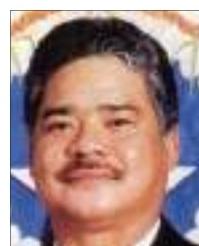
a fraction of the numbers of U.S. citizens in jobs compared to past years.



See FEWER on Page 4

3 lawmakers post perfect attendance

Yumul and Santos had most excused absences



Palacios



Sablan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Three of the 20 members of the House of Representatives got a perfect attendance in 2008, showing up at all 40 sessions this year.

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios and Reps. Christina Marie E. Sablan and Edward T. Salas all obtained a 100-

See 3 LAWMAKERS on Page 4



MARK RABAGO

Passengers of Vladivostok Air's first of three charter flights submit their passports to an Immigration official inside the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport yesterday.

140 Russians arrive in Vlad Air charter

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Vladivostok Air's first of three charter flights touched down at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport at

3:40pm yesterday with 140 Russians packing the flight to capacity.

Marianas Visitors Authority marketing manager Bruce A. Bateman was on hand, along with several MVA staff, to welcome the arrivals with shell leis and

warm "hafa adai" greetings.

"We're just happy as it can be over their arrival. Especially considering some hoops that had to be jumped through in order to accomplish it. We're

See 140 RUSSIANS on Page 4

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Local

'Federal gov't did not enforce laws in the garment factories'

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Since the inception of the CNMI garment manufacturing industry, all U.S. labor laws have been followed save for the minimum wage law, which was up to federal agencies to enforce, according to one government official.

In his declaration supporting the federalization lawsuit, Richard A. Pierce, the governor's special assistant for economic affairs and trade relations, said the U.S. Labor Department, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, and the U.S. Justice Department were responsible for enforcing the minimum wage provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

"However, because the Commonwealth is a small place, the federal government did not devote the necessary resources to law enforcement," he added.

Law enforcement was also made more difficult due to the "tightened and extended" contracts between garment workers and their employers.

"Because many guest workers, particularly those from China and Korea, did not speak English and had no connections in the Commonwealth when they arrived, employers often provided food and housing as a part of the employment contract so that workers would be located close to the factory and time on the factory floor could be made more efficient," he said.

But, he added, the federal government did not bring in translators or other experts in fair labor practices to Saipan, although authorities had long had experiences with labor problems in garment factories in the U.S. mainland.

Pierce, later in the declaration, did note the 1999 multimillion dollar class action lawsuits brought by unions, consumer groups and factory workers against factories.

"The complaints included many allegations including unpaid overtime [based on factory practices], unsafe work conditions, and violations of U.S. labor laws. The lawsuits gained wide publicity although the more sensational claims were not, and could not be, proved.

As the cases progressed, the courts ultimately dismissed all claims except the claim for unpaid overtime," he wrote.

The lead lawyers in the cases, he added, were later indicted by federal officials and pleaded guilty to violating laws in other cases.

Some \$6 million of the \$19 million won in the cases was used to set up the Garment Oversight Board to monitor working conditions in the industry, he said. Since 2000, factory operations have greatly improved, including wage payment, health and safety, and employer/employee relationships, Pierce added.

"Since 2005, U.S. Labor Department reports indicate most enforcement activity centered on wage issues that arose when factories became unprofitable or bankrupt and paid workers late or not at all," he said. "Most of these cases were handled by the Commonwealth's Labor Department. Local and federal enforcement activity has been relatively minor."

In 2005 the U.S. Department of Labor stepped in after La Mode, Inc. shut down without paying its workers back wages. The department helped distribute \$329,000 in back wages to workers for overtime worked between Dec. 6, 2004 and Jan. 16, 2005.

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2 US senators question McPhee's impact report

The U.S. Senate's Committee on Energy and Natural Resources have raised questions regarding the "sources and assumptions" in the federally funded report on the economic impact of the federalization law.

Sen. Jeff Bingaman, who chairs the committee, and Sen. Lisa Murkowski told Malcolm McPhee in a letter dated Dec. 17, 2008, that his study contains useful information and recommendations, but "it also raises some questions regarding sources and assumptions."

McPhee of the Washington D.C.-based Malcom D. McPhee and Associates and Dick Conway co-wrote the study titled *Economic Impact of Federal Laws on the CNMI*. The study was funded by the Interior Department and was released in October 2008.

The senators attached in their

letter some questions in order for them understand the scope of work assigned to McPhee's firm as well as the methodology and process used in completing the report. They expect McPhee's response by Jan. 15, 2009.

Bingaman and Murkowski said the economic impact report assumes that all permanent alien workers will be deported by 2014.

The senators said the basis for this assumption were the sentences: "It is imprudent to assume that the implementing agencies will interpret the will of Congress as permitting an indefinite transition period and regulatory flexibility" and "the practice of federal agencies to use this flexibility to the CNMI's advantage is highly speculative."

"This report is presented as an economic study, but this non-

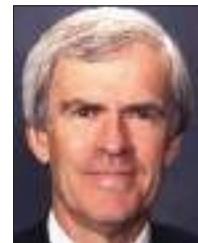
economic assumption effectively determines its conclusions," the senators said.

Bingaman and Murkowski noted that Section 701 of Public Law 110-229 (federalization law) states that the intention of Congress is "to maximize, to the greatest extent practicable, potential adverse economic and fiscal effects of phasing-out the Commonwealth's non-resident contract worker program and to maximize the Commonwealth's potential for future economic growth and business growth by...providing a mechanism for the continued use of alien workers."

The senators asked McPhee to identify the political expert(s)

who were consulted in reaching the assumption and detail their basis for making it.

They pointed out that the report, which was funded by the



Bingaman



Murkowski

U.S. Department of the Interior, has been used to support the CNMI's lawsuit against federalization.

The senators asked McPhee as to when he first learned that the CNMI or its lawyers intend-

ed to use, or might be considering using, the report in this way.

"Were any CNMI officials or representatives given a draft copy of this report before the final copy was released to the public and, if so, were any changes made as a result of comments, corrections, or criticisms made by CNMI officials or representatives? If so, what were the changes?" the senators asked.

The senators also asked, among other things, to provide an estimate of the number of Freely Associated States citizens currently employed in the CNMI and an estimate of those potentially available from the FAS as workers in the CNMI.

The report examines how new

federal laws, especially those relating to labor and immigration, will affect the CNMI's ability to produce jobs, revenue and a private sector tax base.

One of the major conclusions in the report states that "under a federalized immigration system, the CNMI will lose approximately 44 percent of its gross domestic product, 60 percent of its jobs, and 45 percent of its personal income by 2015."

The report listed eight recommendations for the CNMI to achieve economic recovery.

McPhee and co-author Conway are the same persons who wrote the CNMI's economic study released in 1999 by the Northern Marianas College. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)



CERTIFIED TECHNICIAN

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ramon Garrido Villagomez II, son of the late Justice Ramon Villagomez and Angie Chong Villagomez, receives his Harley-Davidson and Yamaha Certified Technician Program Certificate on Dec. 12, 2008, at the Motorcycle Mechanics Institute/UTI in Phoenix, Arizona.

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Borja wins 'Ultimate Outdoor Party Package'

Miller Lite sets stage for 'Ultimate Home Theater Package'

After a four-month promotional period during which thousands of people entered the Miller Lite "Ultimate Outdoor Party Package" giveaway, three lucky

winners were selected on Dec. 23 at the Price Costco center.

Christmas came a few days early for grand prize winner Dwayne Borja of

San Antonio. He walked away with the following items:

- 7kW Honda Generator
- 37" LCD HDTV

- Xbox 360 Pro Gaming System
- Miller Lite Canopy 10x10 tent
- Miller Lite Special Edition NFL BBQ Grill

- Miller Lite Outdoor Dining Set
- Miller Lite Cooler full of products

"We're happy to give back to our loyal customers, especially during the holidays," said Pacific Trading Co. general manager Charles Cepeda. "And we couldn't think of a better way to kick off the New Year than with the Ultimate Outdoor Party package. With the generator, the huge LCD, and the Xbox, this package raises the traditional outdoor party experience to a whole new level."

Two secondary prize packages were also given away. These packages included the Miller Lite Canopy, Miller Lite Cooler full of products, Miller Lite Dining Set and Miller Lite Special Edition NFL BBQ Grill. The lucky winners of these packages were Alfred Fernandez and Luis Camacho.

"We've had a great year of exceptional giveaways from Miller Lite, and we're not letting up anytime soon," said Miller Lite sales manager Glen

Hunter. "This year, our loyal customers have walked away with a Yamaha Motorbike, a Harley Davidson Roadster, and of course, the Ultimate Outdoor Party Package."

"Now we're getting ready to launch our next promotion in January—the Ultimate Home Theater Package Giveaway. The lucky winner will be able to convert any ordinary living room into a state-of-the-art personal movie theater, complete with a deluxe set of La-Z-Boy Theater Recliners that are specially designed for optimal sound and viewing, as well as superior comfort."

Adds PTC marketing manager Mike Babauta, "Miller Lite is the Ultimate Lite Beer, and we are complementing our product with ultimate prizes. We had a record number of entries with the Ultimate Outdoor Party Package, and we expect to top that with the Ultimate Home Theater giveaway."

Beginning January, the Ultimate Home Theater Package promotion will run for a three-month period. During that time anyone who purchases a 12 pack of Miller from participating retailers will receive a form to enter the contest. For more information on this or any upcoming Miller Lite promotions contact Mike Babauta at 322-6624. (PR)



PTC marketing manager Mike Babauta, left, poses with grand_prize_winner Dwayne Borja of San Antonio.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

140 RUSSIANS

From Page 1

excited about the possibilities about the future of these flights," he said.

Bateman said passengers of the charter flight needed to go through inspection by the Transportation Security Administration in Japan before proceeding to the CNMI.

"It was a bit difficult to have all the necessary paperwork completed so that these flights could actually fly in here. Specifically, there were problems with TSA but those were accomplished with the aircraft actually stopping off in Japan. They inspected it there before it was allowed to come in here. That's solved the problem and they accomplished their mission and we're pretty happy to welcome them all here," he said.

Bateman said the great reception the charter flight from Vladivostok got bodes well for the future of the market.

"Especially considering that Vlad Avia, if they can fill these three charter flights, are interested in working in regularly scheduled flights from these Far Eastern Russian city. MVA is certainly trying to help all we can in promoting these flights and helping these people fill their airplanes so they in turn could bring in long staying tourists to our area."

The visitors from the former So-



MARK RABAGO
Passengers arriving from the Vladivostok Air charter flight are greeted with shell leis yesterday at the Saipan International Airport.

viet Union are expected to stay in the CNMI until Jan. 7 and Jan. 18, which incidentally are the arrival dates of the other two charter flights.

The Vladivostok Air charter flights are using Russian-built Tupolev TU204-300 with capacity got eight business class and 132 economy class seats—bringing the total maximum capacity of passengers at 140 each flight.

Vladivostok Air and fellow Russian carrier DalAvia flew special charter

flights to the CNMI in the waning days of 2007, which exemplified the islands' growing appeal to the market.

Fiscal year to date number indicate that the Russian tourism market is up 86 percent from the same period year ago—449 in October-November 2008 to 836 in the same period in fiscal year 2009. Just last month, 456 visitors from the former Soviet Union arrived in the CNMI, compared to 261 in November 2007.

The CNMI, three hours travel from most cities in Japan, are served from Japan by Northwest Airlines. From Korea, Asiana Airlines provides daily direct flights from Seoul and four times a week from Busan.

Vladivostok Air, founded in 1932, is now the largest air carrier in Russia's Far East. It carries over 700,000 passengers annually and provide flight service to 32 domestic destinations as well as 12 international destinations.

FEWER

From Page 1

As of Sept. 30 this year, 1,389 citizens had registered with Employment Services with 115, or 8 percent, hired. Since 2004, at least 20 percent of citizens registered with the service were hired each year.

The numbers are part of the Department of Labor's Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat's declaration supporting Gov. Benigno Fitial's federalization lawsuit against the U.S. government.

Kaipat notes that, "others who registered found employment on their own and still others emigrated to Guam, Ha-

waii, or the mainland U.S. and found jobs there."

According to the declaration, Employment Services conducts an assessment of skills after a U.S. citizen registers with the service. When job openings occur, Employment Services refers the person with the appropriate skills. The employer who received the referral must hire the person or explain why the person is not qualified for the job or was not hired.

Kaipat, in the declaration, takes issue with reported unemployment rates for the Commonwealth, particularly among residents. She cites the estimate of 14 percent total unemployment rate at about 7.7 percent.

Kaipat said she believes there is cul-

tural bias in the way the U.S. collects unemployment data in the CNMI. She lists five reasons: surveys are done primarily in English, with Spanish the only alternative; and foreign workers, who conduct the surveys because they can be paid cheaper thus making the surveys cheaper overall, do not speak English very well or clearly and "their accents may make their spoken English difficult for local people to understand."

Also, Kaipat said, local people are under the impression the surveys require a "yes" answer to the question about actively looking for work or their eligibility for food stamps will be revoked.

Fourth, some people counted as unemployed are in the process of moving to Guam, Hawaii or the U.S. mainland for work. And lastly, employment surveys disregard the traditional employment within the extended family structure that is a full time job itself, she said.

In the declaration, Kaipat shares details of the Employment Services website that was created in March, including the figure that since Jan. 1 through Sept. 30, 6,886 jobs were posted on the site.

In November, the Labor Department increased its fees for business employers from \$250 to \$300 to help fund the new site and equipment that totaled \$350,000.

Floor Leader calls for revenue generating bills

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Saying that Gov. Benigno Fitial's rejection of the Legislature's proposed \$165.4-million budget plan for fiscal year 2009 is not surprising, House Floor Leader Joseph N. Camacho yesterday urged his colleagues in the House to act together by introducing and passing revenue generating bills.

RELATED NEWS

'Revenue generating bills' and the House of Representatives.

PAGE 11

generating bills, and continue to introduce and pass revenue generating bills until there is a surplus.

"I have been calling for revenue generating bills since the beginning, yet even at this critical hour the Legislature

takes its sweet time to take decisive action to relieve the suffering of the people. The answer is simple—revenue generating bills," Camacho said when asked to comment on Fitial's veto of the proposed budget plan.

What House lawmakers should do, Camacho said, is to "get off their behinds," introduce revenue

generating bills, and continue to introduce and pass revenue generating bills until there is a surplus.

Fitial urged the Legislature instead to pass measures to re-implement non-working alternate Fridays (called austerity Fridays), implement non-paid holidays, and reduce remittances to the Retirement Fund.

"All that is required is hard work and the collective energy of each member of the House of Representatives to commit to the idea that many of the problems can be solved if we show true leadership and think above and beyond petty party politics and the small-mindedness of individual members' gubernatorial aspirations," Camacho said.

Citing a drop of \$8.7 million in the Finance Department's revised revenue estimate, Fitial on Christmas Eve rejected the Legislature's proposed budget plan for FY 2009.

Fitial urged the Legislature instead to pass measures to re-implement non-working alternate Fridays (called austerity Fridays), implement non-paid holidays, and reduce remittances to the Retirement Fund.

Legislature's leadership.

Camacho said the Legislature cannot pretend to be surprised that the governor vetoed the budget because of decreased revenue.

"All you have to do is drive down Beach Road and Middle Road and see all the businesses

that have closed down. The government does not run on wishful thinking and fairy dust. Government runs on taxes collected on revenues. No business means no taxes. The math is simple. Less business means less taxes which means less government services," the Floor Leader said.



REY BELGADO

CHRISTMAS PARTY

DFS employees pose for a picture on the stage of the Hard Rock Café during the company's Christmas party held on Dec. 20, 2008. The staff came wearing costumes of different countries as part of the party's United Nation theme.

FBI hands off as CISCO works on CUC's engines

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Since the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. began revisiting the sole-source contract the utility agency signed with the Commonwealth Industrial Supply Co. Inc., CUC has not heard from federal authorities.

Federal and local authorities, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, had been investigating the \$885,000 contract between CUC and CISCO to repair six engines at Power Plant 2 because the money came from the federal government.

CISCO had ceased work on the engines earlier this year, but in October CUC executive director Tony Muña disclosed that the two companies were revisiting the contract and CISCO was once again working on the engines.

"This time around we're ensuring we have a certain degree of reliability on those eight megawatts," Muña said. "There were events between CUC and CISCO that precluded seeing that reliability."

The initial contract was for 10 megawatts, Muña said, but in late 2006 CUC accepted eight megawatts of production. As of the middle of December, Power Plant 2 was producing four megawatts, and CISCO was working on bringing online a third and fourth engine.

Muña said federal authorities initially inquired about the contract before he took over as executive director. When CUC decided to revisit the contract, they went through the federal officials to make sure it was acceptable.

"They said they didn't have a problem with that," Muña said.

CUC entered into the CISCO contract without soliciting bids or proposals from any other company. Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez, according to the governor's state of emergency declaration, approved the contract on May 14, 2006.

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A final swim for the year along Tinian's shoreline

THE OLD MAN IN THE SEA

By JAMES BELL
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: On June 9 this year, James H. Bell celebrated his 70th birthday by repeating a feat he first achieved nearly three decades ago—swimming across the Tinian channel—this time from Saipan to Tinian. He followed this up by swimming around the entire island of Saipan (a 45-mile distance) in several stages that ended on Sept. 20, 2008. This time, Bell is attempting to swim around the entire island of Tinian. This is a continuation of a series relating Bell's adventures in this attempt.

The return of the northeast trade winds has generated swell and wind waves that make shoreline swimming on the east side of the island rather dangerous in the areas which have a wave cut bench

at the base of cliffs. That has restricted my swimming to areas on the west side of the island since the middle of November. On December 17th I decided to see how bad it was on the east side, but I will relate that adventure after catching up the two swims that completed all but the south end of the west side.

I ended my first report with the Old Man in the Sea hanging from a bush on a 100 foot cliff. No, actually, I finished that tale with the OMITS (how's that for an acronym!) slurping water at the side of the road so as not create too much suspense between installments. My next swim had to pick up at the bottom of the cliff, but I opted not to climb back down the cliff. I started from North Dumpcoke Point and swam back to the cliff and then back to the point and out of Dumpcoke Bay. If they ever build a casino on that bay I

imagine they will come up with a classier name than "Dumpcoke."

On the way to the cliff, I saw four green turtles together, which is unusual. Two were probably over 100 lbs. The rest of the swim was along a stretch of benches ending in low cliffs. I experienced an opposing current and found that I could hold discouragement at bay by picking a coral head or some other identifiable feature, swimming to it and then looking ahead to another feature. That way I could see progress, slow as it might be.

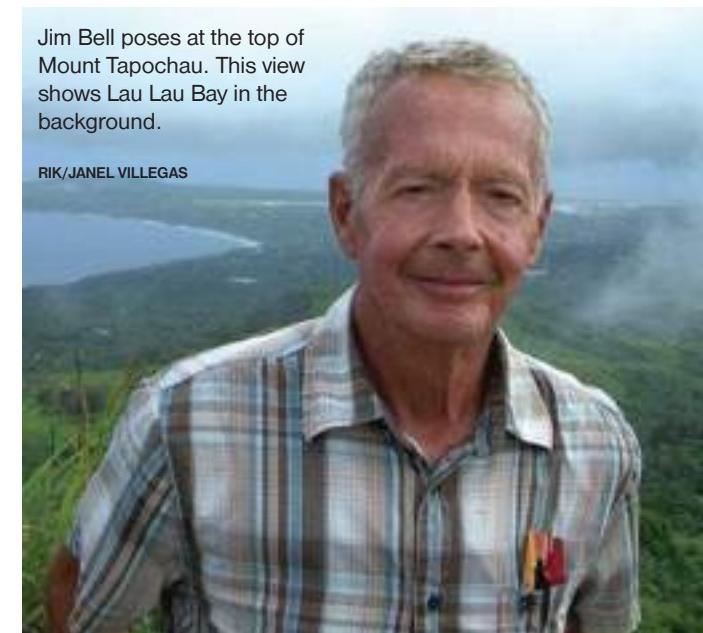
Chulu Beach

Finally the beach I was looking for came slowly into view. I was looking at Chulu Beach or "White Beach Number Two" as it was designated for the amphibious assault during World War II. It was with some misgivings that

planners picked this beach and a smaller beach to the north for the invasion since both were very narrow, but the result has been called by some the most brilliantly conceived and executed amphibious operation in WWII. The 2nd Marine Division and naval support forces played the role of decoys, advancing on the beach adjacent to Tinian Town (now called San Jose) farther south on the west coast of Tinian on the morning of July 24, 1944. This was a much better landing place than the beaches to the north so the Japanese, who were already well prepared for a landing here, were not surprised at this development. Our forces were unhurried in their approach in order to give the Japanese time to concentrate their forces, then, after taking some heavy hits from shore batteries, the forces steamed north and joined

Jim Bell poses at the top of Mount Tapochau. This view shows Lau Lau Bay in the background.

RIK/JANEL VILLEGRAS



the 4th Marine Division, which was already storming ashore on the lightly defended northern beaches. I saw a large anchor in a trench outside the reef at Chulu Beach, but no other signs of battle. The reef and shore give little indication of the destructive forces unleashed here.

To complete the last leg of the west side of the island, I reversed my usual clockwise track and swam south from Tahong Point, the northern point of the island, back to Chulu Beach. This point is also called Cross Point because of the monuments erected there in memory of 13 people who have perished in the Timian-Saipan Channel, most in boating accidents.

Swell was approaching from the east, pivoting around the point, surging up over the bench and then slamming into the base of a low cliff just to the west of the point. About 50 yards east of the point, the waves were moving more parallel to shore with the water rising and falling like an elevator and usually not topping the bench. I elected to enter the water via the elevator and jumped in when it got to my floor.

Babui Beach

I had not checked the charts too carefully before my swim, but knew I would first pass Lamlam Beach, a small beach from which I started my swim of the Saipan-Tinian Channel in June. I knew Chulu Beach was about 1 1/2 miles south of Lamlam Beach and was surprised at the good pace I was setting when the beach came into view sooner than I expected after passing Lamlam. The beach looked smaller than I remembered Chulu Beach and my doubts were confirmed when I came ashore after a somewhat challenging low tide reef crossing. I had come ashore on what I would later find out was Babui Beach, known as "White Beach Number One" in the WWII amphibious assault.

Relaunching was an easy matter of wading out to the reef and jumping into deeper water between waves.

My swim down the shoreline to Chulu Beach was eventful from the standpoint of observing 13 coral-eating crown of thorns starfish in a 20-minute

period. This is more than the total I had observed up to this time since returning to the islands. I hope this is not the beginning of an infestation like the one in the late '60s. It will be something to keep an eye on.

This last swim was on Nov. 12 and would be my last swim for over a month that actually contributed to completing the shoreline. Due to the hazardous conditions on the east coast, I had to be content with exploring a patch reef with great coral diversity and some other areas closer to home.

Finishing the year

Not wanting to finish the year out without making some more progress, on Dec. 17 I decided to see just how bad the east side was. The trade winds had not been too strong for a couple of days and it looked like my best opportunity. It did not look too promising at Tahong Point with the waves just to the west of the point now plunging on the bench instead of just surging across it. However, as before, there was a place where I could cross the bench and jump in a little farther to the east.

My plan was to swim down the east coast to Chiget Beach, a distance of about three miles. I did not go too far before I realized I probably better scale back my plans. There was a current running in the Saipan-Tinian channel from east to west; not too strong near shore but enough to impede progress, combined with confused seas caused by incoming swell colliding with outgoing waves reflected from the face of the bench.

The water was very clear allowing viewing of coral formations and sea creatures. In the first two hours, I saw three blacktip sharks and seven green turtles, two of the turtles probably weighing in over 100 lbs. Later, a black stingray and 6-foot black moray eel finished out my creature list for the day and I turned my attention to conditions along the shoreline.

This part of the coast was an unbroken line of rock bench projecting four or five feet above the sea surface and extending back

See A FINAL on Next Page

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Attorney fees	\$ 2,500.00
Community service	100 hrs.
Missed working days	3 days-1 month
TOTAL	\$ 4,850.00

Fee based on costs from various locations



Department of Public Safety
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call 664-9084/85



Yumul wants a flat tax in the CNMI

Rep. Ray N. Yumul has introduced a BILL that seeks to simplify and enact a flat tax in the Commonwealth.

House Bill 16-205, which is also supported by three other representatives, proposes to amend the provisions of the revenue and taxation laws in effect in the CNMI. These provision are in Chapter 2 of 4 CMC, Division 1 of the Commonwealth Code.

The legislation's intents are to reform and simplify the taxation of individuals, repeal the Commonwealth wage and salary tax, and repeal the Commonwealth

earnings tax.

The bill, titled the *Tax Reform and Simplification Act of 2008*, seeks to enact a simple flat tax of 10 percent based on total income received from sources within the CNMI.

The other purposes of the bill are:

- To provide for the first time by law a deduction for all premiums paid for the purchase of health insurance by self-employed individuals and employees whose employers do not provide, or are not responsible for, medical costs.

- To provide for dependent

and child support exemptions from taxable income.

- To provide a housing exemption to self-employed individuals and employees whose employers are not legally responsible for or do not provide them with housing or a housing allowance benefit.

- To provide such additional deductions and exemptions in determining taxable income under the flat tax that promote equity and fairness among taxpayers whose total income may be similar but whose circumstances differ. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

retreated in the interest of self-preservation. I had some lumps and was losing some blood, but nothing major.

I swam on for another hour and a half and, with about an hour and a half of daylight remaining, I was not seeing anything promising. It had taken me over six hours to cover less than three miles. I had gotten an appreciation of measures I need to take in swimming the rest of the east shoreline and I had learned some valuable lessons about the bench, but it was time to head for home.

Painful 'souvenirs'

It was hard to see looking into the setting sun, but I spotted what looked like a slot running through the bench and almost to the base of the 12-foot cliff beyond. At the end of the slot, the sun was shining through a crack in the cliff and it looked more inviting than anything I had seen or anything I could see ahead. As I started into the slot, a big wave hit me from behind and ripped my face mask off. The wave pushed me into what seemed like a big washing machine. Water was cascading into the slot from the bench on both sides and waves were surging in from the entrance. The incoming waves kept pushing me farther into the slot until I could touch bottom. As the water got shallower, I could almost get my feet set against the water being pulled out by the next wave, but was then dragged across the rocks. I finally got my feet set and was pushed in by the next wave. I scrambled up the narrow bench at the end of the slot and climbed up the crack in the cliff to the top.

The next morning, I would take an inventory of my "souvenirs" from my adventure. I had a sunburned forehead, bruised rib, bruised elbows and calf. I had 49 cuts, scratches and scuffs. The loss of my face mask was the only serious damage.

For now, I had a couple of hundred yards of rough coral rocks covered with bushes weeds and vines between me and the road. Sometimes the vegetation was chest deep and the only way I could get through was to lie on my back and inch my way over the top, occasionally breaking through to dirt and rock below. I crawled under a vine covered bush with one

more pile of vines ahead which ended up being underlain by a 7-foot chain like fence. It was dark when I dropped down from the fence to the road. I had worn canvas shoes for this swim and started pounding pavement. I phoned in my safe return from a phone at the airport.

The year 2008 was a good year. I returned to the islands and the sea for the first time in 27 years. I celebrated my 70th birthday in the middle of the Saipan-Tinian Channel and have had other adventures of which I have dreamed of for decades.

I hope this has been a good year for you and that this will be a joyous Christmas. I am looking forward to 2009 and hope that you are. More to follow in 2009.

A FINAL

From Page 6

to a low cliff. The coast line was facing directly into the approaching swell and the benches were taking a pounding. In scaling back my distance goal, I decided to try to come ashore at the blowhole, the place where I ended my last swim of the channel. There are several blowholes along the coast where incoming waves force air and water up through cracks in the bench, resulting in geysers of water and spray. Figuring out which one was the one I was aiming for was a little difficult, but it did not really make any difference because the waves hitting the bench did not invite exiting at any of the blowholes.

Runway Able

At this time, I was passing the east end of Runway Able, a B-29 runway constructed after we invaded Tinian. It was on Aug. 6, 1945, that a B-29 took off from this runway heavily loaded and struggling for altitude as it crossed the shoreline at 2:45 in the morning. The plane was named *Enola Gay*, the maiden name of the pilot's mother and in its bomb bay was a bomb named "Little Boy", neither name giving any hint of what lay ahead for the city of Hiroshima, Japan. It was a much lighter *Enola Gay* that touched down on the runway that afternoon after a 12-hour flight. The mission had been successful, a mission that would hasten the end of a war that had already cost over 50 million lives, a mission that would change the world and the crew of the *Enola Gay*.

About an hour later, with no breaks in the bench in sight, I decided it was time to see just how formidable an obstacle the bench face was. I saw a place where it looked like there were projections at the top of the bench face that I could hang onto as a wave surged over the top. The waves did not seem to be surging high enough to lift me over the edge and that proved to be the case. However, the handholds were hard to find in the foam as the wave surged and I slid back down the face of the bench 7 or 8 feet into the trough of the next wave. I tried this several times and then





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New students MUST make an appointment at the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Office in Building "G" to take the CASAS Assessment Test

Starting January 5-22, 2009 in Room K-1 at NMC.

Ongoing/Returning Student Registration:
January 26-27, 2009, 10 am to 6 pm in ABE Office.

New Student Registration:
January 28-29, 2009, 10 am to 6 pm in ABE Office.

Late Registration:
January 30 - February 02, 2009, 9 am to 4 pm in ABE Office.

Student Orientation:
February 02, 2009, 5-6:30 pm in D-1

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Adult Basic Education Program
Spring 2009 Schedule

Adjunct Orientation: <i>CASAS Appraisal Test</i>	January 16, 2009	F	06:00-07:30 PM	TBA
	January 05-06 & 12-13, 2009	M-T	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Pre-Test	January 07-08 & 14-15, 2009	W-Th	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Post-Test <i>For Referred Returning Students</i>	January 20-22, 2009	T-Th	09:00-10:30 AM	K-1
			01:00-02:30 PM	K-1
			05:00-06:30 PM	K-1
CASAS Make-Up Tests	January 20-22, 2009	T-Th	09:00-04:00 PM	K-2
Registration for Returning Students:	January 26-27, 2009	M-T	10:00-06:00 PM	ABE
Registration for New Students:	January 28-29, 2009	W-Th	10:00-06:00 PM	ABE
Late Registration:	January 30, February 02, 2009	F-M	09:00-04:00 PM	ABE
Student Orientation:	February 02, 2009	M	05:00-06:30 PM	D-1
Add/Drop for Students:	February 04-13, 2009		08:00-05:00 PM	ABE
First Day of Instruction:				
T-Th Classes				
			February 04, 2009 (Wednesday)	
			February 05, 2009 (Thursday)	
Saturday Classes			February 07, 2009	
Sunday Classes			February 08, 2009	
Last Day of Instruction:				

This schedule is subject to change. For more information please contact the ABE Office at 234-5498 Ext. 1723 or 1724

This advertisement was paid for from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

VFW cites Palijo, Alamer, Davis

Calvary Christian Academy student Zelena Palijo romped off with the first prize in the Veteran of Foreign Wars' annual Voice of Democracy writing-and-speaking competition, while Karen Alamer, also from the Calvary Christian school, won first place in the Patriot's Pen essay writing competition. Both were honored during an awards presentation held at the VFW Post No. 3457 Canteen on Dec. 22, 2008.

The Voice of Democracy is the VFW's premier scholarship program where students compete by writing and recording a broadcast script on an annual patriotic theme. This contest is open to students in grade nine through 12. The Patriot's Pen contest, on the other hand, gives student an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on democracy. This is open to students in grades six through eight.

Besides Palijo, the other winners in the Voice of Democ-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Post commander Mariano Fajardo, Daphne Dela Cruz, Zelena Palijo, Jermaine Peres, Nacita Aldan, Ian Rogolifoi, and Leslie Jackson, Post program chairman. Not shown are Patriot's Pen first place winner Karen Alamer and John H. Davis.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Calvary Christian Academy student Zelena Palijo is presented the first prize in the Veteran of Foreign Wars' annual Voice of Democracy competition.

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD MEETING

The regular monthly meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Monday, January 05, 2009 at 6:00 PM, Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Bldg., Saipan

- A. Preliminary Matters
 - 1. Call to Order
 - 2. Roll Call
 - 3. Adoption of Agenda
 - 4. Adoption of Minutes
 - 5. Communications
 - B. Reports
 - 1. Chairman
 - 2. Secretary
 - 3. Treasurer
 - 4. Administrator
 - 5. Committees
 - 6. Legal Counsel
 - C. Public Hearings
 - 1. Big Bang Enterprise: Notice of Violation 2008-1020
 - 2. Conditional Use: 2008-2063 S.Y. Kim's Development Corp
 - 3. Preliminary Plat Major Subdivision: 2008-1878 Jane Mack
 - D. Contested Cases: None
 - E. Permits and related actions: review and decide
 - 1. Conditional Use: 2008-2063 S.Y. Kim's Development Corp
 - 2. Preliminary Plat Major Subdivision: 2008-1878 Jane Mack
 - F. Old Business
 - 1. Re-adopt rezones adopted at November 13, 2008 Zoning Board Meeting
 - a. Map 20. Rezone PR to TR, Lots 030 H 01, 02, 03; Rezone VR to VC, various lots
 - b. Map 24. Rezone VC to TR, Lots 006 H 35, 36, 37, 38; Rezone VR to TR Lots 008 H 31, 33, 36, 37; Rezone VR to VC, various lots
 - G. New Business
 - 1. Review new rezone proposals and approve advertising for public comment.
 - H. Executive (Closed) Session - Consult with legal counsel regarding pending or anticipated legal matters.
 - I. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn
- For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact Therese T. Ogumoro, Acting Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).
/s/ Dr. Elizabeth D. Rechebei, Acting Chair

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

S.Y. Kim's Development Corp.

The public is invited to provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on Conditional Use Permit Application, No. 2008-2063, by S.Y. Kim's Development Corp. The application is for the warehousing of lube oil in Puerto Rico.

Date: January 05, 2009 (Monday)
Time: 6:30 pm
Place: Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan.

The conditional use application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may also be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30 pm, December 30, 2008. Written comments may be submitted via e-mail to staff@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or delivered to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please contact Therese T. Ogumoro, Acting Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Division 3 of Title 10 CMC).

/s/ Dr. Elizabeth D. Rechebei, Acting Chair.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 29, 1998

HANMI braces for worst

Hotel operators are bracing for the worst next year as the financial chaos that began more than a year ago in Southeast Asia shows no sign of improvement, according to Ron D. Sablan, president of the Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands. Asia's economic problems dragged the Northern Marianas tourism economy into a double-digit plunge in tourist arrivals which resulted in an average occupancy rate of 50 percent for most hotels, he said. In 1999, Sablan said hotel occupancy may dip further or remain the same as this year. He is however hoping that the tourism economy will show some sign of improvement towards the end of 1999.

Tax receipts drop as business sluggish

Local businesses continue to suffer without let-up from the year-long financial upheaval in Asia, pitching in less taxes to the government coffers in October at \$8.82 million, or an 11 percent decline from the same period last year, according to the governor's financial adviser. While the figure was 21 percent over projections of \$7.28 million for that month, the Business Gross Receipts Tax collections still reflect sluggish business activities in the Northern Marianas. "Although we're slightly ahead of BGRT projections, we're still below last year's," said Michael S. Sablan, special advisor on finance and budget to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio, "As we expected, this activity has been on a downside because of the economic slump."

December 29, 1999

House divided on new student aid bill

Barely 10 months after capping government educational assistance at \$15,000, lawmakers are proposing a new scholarship program that will grant up to \$20,000 in financial aid to exceptional high school students for college here or in the U.S. mainland. But the House of Representatives was divided whether to grant such an amount in light of the financial difficulties confronting the Commonwealth which have reduced the budget set aside for scholarship. Because of the disagreement, Senate Bill 11-67, sponsored by Senate President Paul A. Manglona and passed in July 1998 by the upper house, was referred to the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare for further review.

Lawmakers shoot down 'Chamorro initiative'

Due to potential racial conflict, the House of Representatives yesterday voted down a legislative initiative seeking a constitutional amendment to refer to Chamorro as indigenous people of the Northern Marianas. "It's sad that we have to make the distinction between the Chamorros and the Carolinians," said Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider, who acknowledged that he may be biased for disapproving the proposal because he has a Carolinian blood being part Yapese. He stressed that both races are minorities on the islands, noting that there are about 38,000 people here with Chamorro or Carolinian blood as opposed to 73,000 total population.

December 29, 2000

Budget talks collapse

The House and the Senate failed to hammer out a budget deal yesterday in yet another stalemate that is expected to force the government to use previous approved spending level to operate for the next nine months of FY 2001. House Ways and Means Committee chair Antonio M. Camacho informed the Senate that they were ending the bicameral conference after three previous meetings produced no pact. But his counterpart Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Edward U. Maratita said they would still press for a compromise with the House by early next year since there is no official word yet on the dissolution of the joint committee.

BOE: No to security personnel in campuses

The State Board of Education yesterday voted against a Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council resolution requesting the Public School System to hire and station uniformed security guards in public school campuses. BOE member Esther Fleming strongly expressed opposition to the measure, saying that PSS students do not need to be exposed to a tight-security school environment at the risk of making them feel like "criminals." "Our kids are very good kids. They're not criminals. We don't need security guards in uniforms to treat them as such. They are going through their pre-adolescent stage. This is precisely why we're developing character education in schools," said Ms. Fleming.

Marshall Islands declare state of emergency

Majuro sustained major damage in wake of freak tide

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—Freak waves from related high tides and a storm surge also destroyed villages in Papua New Guinea last week.

The Pacific atoll nation of Marshall Islands remains under a state of emergency after 8 to 18 feet surf flooded parts of the capital, Majuro, and outer islands in recent days.

A combination of high tides and storm surges have pounded the Marshalls three times in the past fortnight, damaging homes and roads.

The main urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye are less than a meter above sea level.

A cleanup to remove tons of debris is underway, and the government's chief secretary, Casten Nemira, told

Radio Australia more heavy waves are forecast over the next 24 hours.

He says hundreds of people are sheltering in churches and temporary accommodation.

A state of emergency was declared on Christmas Eve as widespread flooding displaced hundreds of islanders, damaged dozens of homes and threatened public health.

Upon declaring the state of emergency, President Litokwa Tomeing said at least 600 people were forced to take refuge in government-designated shelters and churches.

Casten Nemira says the full extent of the damage will not be known until communication is made with many of the outer islands.

But he says local damage is

already stretching resources.

"Over 200 plus houses were affected and some houses are completely damaged, also the cemeteries by the shore lines and erosions," he said.

"There's been some reports of damage to the properties, health dispensaries and some government facilities, but thankfully there's no casualties or injuries that we've re-

ceived [news of] yet."

Government officials said on Wednesday the flooding showed how vulnerable the western Pacific atoll nation is to very small changes in weather conditions.

The deputy director of the Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination, Deborah Manase, says the damage has been caused despite the waves that crashed into the islands being "quite small".



DRAWING CONTEST

PDM Promoters, Inc. representatives were at the Sinapalo Elementary School on Rota and Tinian Elementary School on Dec. 23 to present gifts and prizes to the winners of the "My Holiday Greetings to our Visitors" drawing contest. The students' entries were posted at the galleries set up at Paseo de Marianas together with the Christmas Tree Decoration Contest. The contest garnered a total of 126 entries.

PDM Promoters Inc. representatives were on Tinian to present Tinian Elementary School students who won in the "My Holiday Greetings to our Visitors" drawing contest. The winners on Tinian are: 1st prize, Tiana Lizama, \$50; 2nd prize, Elton Hofshneider, \$30; 3rd prize, Rosemarie Malicdem \$20. They are shown here with Tinian school principal Maria T. Rios. Crayons and stationery kits were also provided to all participating students on Tinian.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



PDM Promoters Inc. representatives were on Rota on Dec. 23 to present Sinapalo Elementary School students who won in the "My Holiday Greetings to our Visitors" drawing contest. The winners on Rota are: 1st prize, Meriden Hocog, \$50; 2nd prize, Theora Manglona, \$30; and 3rd prize, Jana S. Mendiola, \$20. They are shown here with Rota school principal Vanessa Hocog. Crayons and sketch pads were also given to all participating students on Rota.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING : CIVIL CORPORATION : ACTION NO. 07-256

Plaintiff, :

-v- :

The Estate of BENEDICTO : ANGAILEN LIMES, :

Defendant, :

FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on January 23, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Lot No. 015 D 029., situated in China Town, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 971 square meters, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys official cadastral plat no. 015 D 00.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 23, 2009, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Office of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 16th day of December, 2008:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

The Law Offices of MATTHEW T. GREGORY, LLC, Suite 2-C, Sablan Bldg., Chalan Kanoa PMB 419 Box 10000 Saipan, MP 96950 Tel. No. (670) 234-9006/235-9006 Fax No. (670) 235-9007

Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER) FCD-GU
OF THE) CIVIL
PETITION FOR) ACTION
THE GENERAL) NO.
GUARDIANSHIP OF:) 08-0565
YANG LAN,)
Minor Child,)
by) AMENDED
CRISPIN FAISAO) NOTICE
PUA,) OF
Petitioner.) HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Notice is hereby given that CRISPIN FAISAO PUA has filed a petition for the legal guardianship of a minor child in the Commonwealth Superior Court. The original petition is available for review at the Office of the Clerk of Court at Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and at the Law Offices of Matthew T. Gregory, LLC, Suite 2-C, Sablan Bldg., Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A hearing on the above-captioned matter will be held on January 26th, 2009, at 1:30 p.m. at the Superior Court in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dated this 24th day of December, 2008.

/s/ Clerk of Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF HAWAII,) CIVIL
Plaintiff,) ACTION
vs.) NO.
SYLVIA ARRIOLA PE and) 07-0455
RENTO S. PE,)
Defendants.)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Amended Order issued by the Court in this matter on November 5, 2008, I will sell, at public auction to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property:

EA 415-3 NEW-3, (formerly part of EA 415-3 NEW, which was part of original EA 415), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2026/89, the original of which was recorded 07 DEC 88 as Document No. 88-3910 at Commonwealth Recorder's, Saipan.

Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on January 9th, 2009, at the hour of 9:00a.m., at the Carlsmith Ball LLP, Carlsmith Building, Capitol Hill, Isa Drive, P.O. Box 5241, Saipan, MP 96950-5241. The sale will be opened to general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

Dated: Saipan, MP, December 18, 2008.

/s/ Vincent J. Seman
Attorneys for Plaintiff



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NO. RF09-055

OFFICE SPACE RENTAL – TINIAN

OPENING DATE: December 23, 2008

INTERESTED PARTIES MAY PICK UP THE SPECIFICATIONS AT THE NMI RETIREMENT FUND OFFICE ON TINIAN, LOCATED IN SAN JOSE VILLAGE, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS (8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M., MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, EXCEPT CNMI HOLIDAYS).

CLOSING DATE: January 22, 2009

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 360

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Lynn A. Knight PUBLISHER
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Attacking the Endangered Species Act

The Bush administration had the good sense to stop trying to push through last-minute regulations that would have made it easier to build coal-fired plants and other polluting facilities near national parks. It was wise to hold off on changing "new source review" rules that govern when power plants must add pollution-reduction equipment. But it couldn't leave well enough alone when it issued regulations that essentially gut the Endangered Species Act. Because the rule will take effect before Barack Obama assumes the presidency, he's stuck with it. But relief could come by way of the courts.

This so-called midnight regulation, despite White House chief of staff Joshua Bolten's directive against such a move, is brought to you by the Interior Department. In May, it listed the polar bear as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act because global warming is shrinking Arctic sea ice. The law was never intended to make up for President Bush's inaction on climate change. But Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne's attempt to protect the polar bear without taking on the larger task of regulating carbon emissions eviscerates the Endangered Species Act.

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act says that "Each Federal agency, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary, shall insure that any action authorized, funded or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat. ..." Where Kempthorne got it right is in preventing the effects of "global processes" (climate change) from triggering consultation "because of the inability to separate out the effect of a specific Federal action from a multitude of other factors that contribute through global processes." But Kempthorne went further by reinterpreting the statute to mean that agencies do not have to consult the Fish and Wildlife Service (or any other service) for actions that may affect (begin italic) any (end italic) species, not just polar bears.

Currently, the give-and-take of the consultation process produces compromises that allow projects to go forward while minimizing the harm to protected species. But Interior's new rule eliminates that vital check on the ambitions of agencies that want to complete projects. Such a check will become increasingly important as President-elect Obama and Congress move to make infrastructure repair and revitalization (roads, high-speed rail, wind farms, etc.) an essential part of an economic stimulus plan.

A balance must be struck between that plan and protecting species and the environment. No doubt environmental groups will sue to stop the regulation. By settling out of court on terms that are favorable to the plaintiff and that match the new president's philosophy, Interior Secretary-designate Ken Salazar and the Obama administration could nullify Kempthorne's ill-advised rule much faster than by undertaking the long process of issuing new regulations.

(c) 2008, The Washington Post



Year-end inventory

Wow! In just two more days, 2008 will become history and 2009 will jump in with a bang. The islands will rock with songs and popping champagne bottles wrapped in happy laughter as we party through the night. Just think, the year has flown by and in two more days we start a new one. Hello, 2009! Please be better than 2008.

Allow me a few moments of reflection on what the year should mean to us as we sober up from the frolicking. I always consider the end of the old year and the beginning of the New Year a time to take personal inventory. I want to know what I did last year and consider what I intend to do the New Year. Socrates, the old Greek philosopher, once said: "The unexamined life is not worth living."

As we examine our life, we will see changes we can make in our personal life. As these personal changes mature, we realize that our new actions are also affecting the community. A community only changes for the better or for worst as its citizens change. It is neither the government nor any outside forces that make a community good or bad. It is its citizens and their attitude toward the community.

Let's take a personal inventory of what we did or did not do in the past year. Let's use it as a benchmark to plan for the New Year.

A. Personal Life:

1. What did I do in 2008 to improve myself?
2. Did I read any books?
3. Did I seek out new ideas and use them?
4. What did I do to improve my relations with my spouse, children, and friends?
5. Did I learn any new hobbies or acquire new interests?
6. What did I do to broaden my mental and spiritual character?
7. What did I do to become a better person?
8. Did I merely consume mountains of meat, rice and beer—thereby expanding only my waist line?

B. Business and Work Life:

1. Did I study how to improve my business or work habits?
2. Did I seek better relations with my customers and fellow employees?
3. Did I learn about new methods for doing my work smarter, not harder?
4. Did I do the same things throughout the year and just curse the bad business climate?
5. Did I merely complain about the lousy work I have to do?
6. In plain words, what did I do to become a better employer or a better employee?

C. Social and Community Life:

1. Did I attend meetings of the clubs or associations I belong to?

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.



2. Did I participate in the religious life of the community?
3. Did I reach out and help those less fortunate than me?
4. Did I concern myself with the social problems that beset the community?
5. What charitable and voluntary work did I do in the community?
6. Basically, what did I give of myself to better the society I live in?

These are only a few of the questions we should ask ourselves as we take inventory of what we did the past year. The next question we should ask ourselves: Will I do better this New Year or will I be the same as last year? Will I just continue to vegetate? Will I be able to look in the mirror and be proud of my developments at the end of 2009? Will I feed only my stomach or my brain as well?

A helpful suggestion is to write the New Year's resolutions on paper and put them into an envelope and seal it. Then at the end of June, open the envelope and read. See if you are still on track to your resolutions. Have you neglected doing what you promised to do or are you on target? When you review them in June, you still have a half a year to improve yourself. Unless you do that, you will soon forget the resolutions and just do nothing to improve yourself.

It's sad how few of us really take our life seriously. We seem to float in a stream. We don't seem to care wherever the stream flows or how fast or how slowly it flows. We just drift along in it. Finally when we hit an embankment, we cannot figure out why it happened to us. Then to justify our failure we blame others for our misfortune. We never seem to ask ourselves: "Why didn't I succeed better in life? What did I fail to do?"

Someone once said to me: Some men die at 25 years old, but are not buried until 75 years old. Are you one of them? It is not too late to wake up and start living.

Success has been defined as the "progressive realization of a worthy goal." Define your goal and begin your journey toward your "progressive goal." Take the personal inventory above and listen to the answers truthfully to yourself. Determine that this New Year will be the best one you have ever had. A better road await!

Happy New Year! Welcome 2009!

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

'Revenue generating bills' and the House of Representatives

Revenue generating bills"—I have repeated this phrase about a thousand times since inauguration day in January 2008. I have asked repeatedly that each legislator should come up with a revenue generating bill that creates a new source of revenue, even if it is just a small amount. If we had done our job we would not have the present budget short fall.

During the budget call, departments and agencies submitted their proposed budget. The Legislature knew then that there will not be enough revenue; I repeated my call for revenue generating bills. Reporting on the budget, the conference committee stated that there will be a 10 percent across-the-board cut on operations; I repeated the call for revenue generating bills. I asked during session that before we act on the budget that we take one week to at least pass revenue generating bills to accompany the budget.

Now, the governor has vetoed the budget because there has been an additional drop in revenue. I renew my call to my colleagues at the Legislature: What we need are revenue generating bills.

The reality is that the House of Representatives has fallen short of its constitutional mandate. Appropriation and revenue bills can only originate in the House of Representatives. The Senate can only watch and wait until the House of Representatives passes appropriation and revenue bills. As a member of the House leadership, I am disillusioned by the lack of action by myself and my fellow legislators. I have for the better part of an entire year tried to work within the leadership to see if good bills can be passed into laws. Instead, my patience for attempting to working within the Leadership has been rewarded by an absence of overall vision and direction, inadequate action at crisis after crisis, outright refusal of some members

to work with others, chronic absenteeism, a lack of understanding of what legislators can do and ought to do, the lax or callous approach to the increasing suffering of the people, and the constant political bickering and grandstanding of gubernatorial aspirants and their respective factions. All talk; no action.

I did not run for political office so that I could feel good about

I did not run for political office so that I could feel good about myself. I have a master's degree in Public Administration and a law degree. I can practice in CNMI courts and the federal courts all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court. I did not need to be a congressman to make me feel good about myself.

myself. I have a master's degree in Public Administration and a law degree. I can practice in CNMI courts and the federal courts all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court. I did not need to be a congressman to make me feel good about myself. I did not run for public office for the salary of a congressman either. I made a lot more money as a private attorney. I was not subjected to public criticism. I did not have to fill-out procurement forms to buy office supplies. No, I can definitely say I did not run for public office for the salary.

Do we really need a Saipan mayor?

There was an interesting story in the *Saipan Tribune* last week: "Tudela at Obama Inauguration". It started me thinking and I wanted to share those thoughts with you.

I met Mayor Tudela on the airplane going to Tokyo several weeks ago. He has a very nice smile and seems to be like an uncle that we would all like to have. He was sitting in first class, having his favorite drink and a snack. He may have requested seat 1-A because he needed to use a wheel chair to exit the airplane. We talked awhile and I thanked him for responding to Rep. Joe Camacho's request to fix Wireless Road. He told me that paving the road was in his plans for the future. ("Does tomorrow ever come?") I reminded him that the road repairs were not completed because his government workers ran out of fuel oil for the equipment that they were using. Also, I mentioned that Frank Camacho had led a group of local folks to raise money to help pay for the road work (truck and compactor).

It seems strange and somewhat concerning to me that the Mayor has the money, from somewhere, to travel First Class to "Conferences" in: India, China, Japan, USA, Washington DC, but he does not have the money to supply his workers' basic needs like fuel. I asked two of the workers on our road, "Where are the trucks you keep stored in Lower Base?" Answer: "None are operational, they all need repairs."

Discrimination in church

It is with sadness to announce that we, the choir that serves in the 9:30am Mass during Sundays (except third Sundays) at Kristo Rai Church, have decided to cease from singing at the said church. It has been, and will always be, a source of personal joy and fulfillment to serve the Lord by singing during the Mass, but it has come to a point where we all felt that we are no longer welcome in Kristo Rai Church. We are moving to other parishes that need or appreciate the service we do.

We have been singing at Kristo Rai Church for seven years. Some of us have been singing with other choirs in other parishes for more than 15 years. There have been several discouragements in the past, incidents that are frustrating and, in most cases, discriminatory. We've simply let all these pass and continued serving the church. Last Dec. 20 after the Dawn Mass, we were witness to a blatant discrimination against Filipinos at the Kristo Rai Church. We witnessed how Mr. Vic Cepeda, a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, shouted at and humiliated a Filipina in the church vicinity witnessed by many churchgoers. The Filipina is Ate Shirley, who works as maintenance for the church. Being a parish official, Mr. Cepeda should have exercised professionalism and should have discussed the matter in private. Instead, Mr. Cepeda chose to explode in public that left the poor Filipina speechless and crying. What caught everyone's attention who witnessed the incident was when Mr. Cepeda said: "This is our church! This is not for the Filipinos. You can tell that to the priest, I don't care!"

Many people heard this, so we are now letting it known to the parish priest and to all Filipinos and everyone concerned that Mr. Cepeda is claiming Kristo Rai church is NOT for Filipinos. The phrase "this is our church" is vague because it does not identify who in particular owns Kristo Rai church but the statement "This is not for the Filipinos" is as clear as the Saipan sky during summer. Anyway we look at it, it's discriminatory to all Filipinos. Not politically but religiously. Can you possibly substantiate why Kristo Rai Church is not for Filipinos, Mr. Cepeda? This is not the first time a shouting incident happened in Kristo Rai during this year's Dawn Masses. For three consecutive mornings before this incident, a member of the local choir would start berating us after the Mass, scolding us for not arranging the hymn books. This she does at the top of her lungs as if she is not inside a church. And she does this even before we stand and leave, so there is no way for her to tell if we are going to arrange the books or not before we leave. And in all cases, it was not a member of the choir who used the hymn books because we have our own copies of the songs but still she directs her anger at us. We ignored all these, but the incident involving Mr. Vic Cepeda is already too much for us to take.

Mr. Cepeda, you owe the Filipinos and the Catholic community an apology for claiming that Kristo Rai Church is not for Filipinos. If you want your own church then go ahead and form a new religion that will not accept Filipinos because as far as we know, Catholic churches do not discriminate against ethnic origins. To make mat-

By JOSEPH NORITA CAMACHO

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joseph Norita Camacho is the Floor Leader of the 16th House of Representatives.

Why I did run for public office was because I wanted to help people. We, the 16th Legislature's House of Representatives have fallen short of what we could have done to improve the lives of the CNMI people. We had fresh new ideas from new legislators, two of them attorneys, a social activist, and a freshman legislator as top vote-getter from Precinct 1. We had the benefit of experience from three former Speaker of the House. We had the numerical majority to pass any legislation supported by the leadership, and the multitude of life experience from other veteran legislators.

What have we done after one year? No plan to solve the ever increasing problems in the CNMI. No action to indicate we are in fact doing our due diligence. No real significant legislation that we can point to and say we did every thing we could within our powers to improve the lives of people in the CNMI. I expected more from the 16th Legislature. I expected more from the House leadership. I expected more from myself. To the people of the CNMI, I will endeavor to work harder and do better this coming year 2009.

would all go if someone paid the expenses. I feel we need the mayor to stay on Saipan and work hard on the problems we face. How can he solve our problems on the other side of the world?

Representatives Joe and Justo work hard here in District 4. We need the mayor to work hard here, too. Why doesn't he? Joe and Justo, back to my question: "Saipan's Mayor, do we need one?" My concern is not the current mayor, he is a very nice man, we all love him for his smile and personality. What we need to consider: do we need the Office of the Mayor to supply services to the public? I am not talking about closing the office, but moving it into a department within the CNMI government. The budget is there, the people are there, can they be pulled together to develop synergy? You know 1+1=3. The activities of the mayor need oversight.

I hope that you, Joe and Justo, will help lead the way to reform our government to make it more responsive to the needs of the people that you represent. I am certain that the Mayor's office has political power, but if it only benefits those few that are on the inside, it is not really a public service.

Joe and Justo, I appreciate your leadership to change the way things are done on Saipan. We depend on you to be our leaders!

Frank Stewart

via e-mail

ters worse, we were joined that morning by a non-Catholic friend who wished to attend the Dawn Mass. He witnessed the pronouncements of Mr. Vic Cepeda and, of course, he was not very pleased. We had to explain to him that Mr. Cepeda does not speak for the entire Catholic community. We are not even sure who his group is when he said "This is our church." Mr. Cepeda, you are painting a very bad picture of the Catholic Church. We are a group of diverse people with different backgrounds, professions and ages with only our desire to sing during the Mass as the commonality that binds us. We don't even have a name to call our choir group. Knowing that we are serving the church in our own little way is the only motivation we have. Recently, altar boys and girls of Kristo Rai Church have joined our group and we have started teaching them to sing for the choir. We believe we are doing a noble deed and we will continue singing praises in churches that would accept us. We are asking the support of all the Filipinos and Catholics who are opposed to this kind of discriminatory acts. Let us not attend any Mass at Kristo Rai Chruch until Mr. Cepeda issues a public apology. Let your voices be heard. We know other choir groups singing at Kristo Rai have experienced the same discrimination. Let us all put an end to the oligarchy in Kristo Rai Church and make it a House of God open to all.

Choir Group, 9:30 AM Mass

Noli Santos—coordinator

Kristo Rai Church

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.pr.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲87° ▾78°

▲87° ▾78°

▲87° ▾78°

▲87° ▾78°

▲87° ▾78°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84 ▾75
Palau	Rain	▲84 ▾77
Yap	Rain	▲85 ▾77
Chuuk	Rain	▲89 ▾77
Pohnpei	Rain	▲85 ▾76
Kosrae	Rain	▲84 ▾71
Majuro	Showers	▲84 ▾76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲73 ▾65
Beijing	Sunny	▲32 ▾16
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲70 ▾61
Honolulu	Showers	▲78 ▾70
London	Cloudy	▲39 ▾30
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲70 ▾49
Manila	Partly Sunny	▲87 ▾76
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲71 ▾52
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲81 ▾63
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲48 ▾32
Osaka	Rain	▲52 ▾41
Paris	Partly Sunny	▲35 ▾29
Pusan	Partly Sunny	▲41 ▾19
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲47 ▾37
Salem	Cloudy	▲44 ▾36
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲57 ▾45
Seoul	Cloudy	▲37 ▾25
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲54 ▾45
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲52 ▾34

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:48AM Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
10:02AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
3:22PM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
7:48PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:42AM	5:56 PM	Today	7:52AM	7:22 PM
Tuesday	6:42AM	5:57 PM	Tuesday	8:34AM	8:13 PM
Wednesday	6:43AM	5:57 PM	Wednesday	9:13AM	9:02 PM
Thursday	6:43AM	5:58 PM	Thursday	9:50AM	9:51 PM
Friday	6:44AM	5:58 PM	Friday	10:26AM	10:39 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:42AM	5:56 PM	Today	7:52AM	7:22 PM
Tuesday	6:42AM	5:57 PM	Tuesday	8:34AM	8:13 PM
Wednesday	6:43AM	5:57 PM	Wednesday	9:13AM	9:02 PM
Thursday	6:43AM	5:58 PM	Thursday	9:50AM	9:51 PM
Friday	6:44AM	5:58 PM	Friday	10:26AM	10:39 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

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■ ISLAND SNAPSHOT Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

■ BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

■ BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

■ SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

■ TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

■ CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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■ Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).

■ Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.

■ Photos must have been taken in the last two months.

■ For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

■ Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

■ Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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■ Fax: (670) 235-3740

■ Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950

■ Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan

To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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■ The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.

■ For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$182. Off-island subscription rate is \$376 per year. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com



Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 20, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO9597 11:50am 12:25pm 1,7

Saipan-Guam

CO9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily

CO9313 8:30am 9:20am Daily

CO9597 11:50am 1:20pm 1,7 via Rota

CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6

CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily

CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily

CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598 3:25am 4:00am 5,6

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am 1,2,3,4,7

CO 9598 2:30am 4:00am 5,6 via Rota

CO 9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily

CO 9600 10:20am 11:10am Daily

CO 9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily

CO 9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily

CO 9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily

Narita-Saipan

NW 076 10:15am 2:40pm Daily

NW 077 6:25pm 1:25am+1 Daily

NW 100 8:45pm 1:15am+1 Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099 5:00am 7:40am Daily

NW 078 8:25am 1:30pm Daily

Could we uncover Watergate today?

By LEONARD DOWNIE JR.
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The death last week of W. Mark Felt—Bob Woodward's secret source, indelibly dubbed “Deep Throat,” who played such a crucial role in The Washington Post's Watergate reporting—coincided with the appearance of Richard M. Nixon, as played by Frank Langella, on local movie screens. As I watched Langella's Nixon being interrogated about the conspiracy and coverup by Michael Sheen's David Frost in “Frost/Nixon,” I relived strong memories. And Felt's death raised the inevitable question: Could the kind of reporting that Woodward and Carl Bernstein pulled off be done today, more than three decades later, in the age of the Internet?

For many reasons, I believe it could. But it would probably play out quite differently.

There are still whistle-blowers like Felt in government today—probably many more than there were back then. They are encouraged by various public employees' organizations and protected by whistle-blowers' legislation enacted after Watergate. And they have many more investigative reporters to talk to—not only at newspapers, despite deep and worrying cuts in newsroom staffs, but also many other media outlets, including investigative Web sites and blogs.

Numerous confidential government and other insider sources have helped Washington Post reporters with investigative stories in recent years, about everything from the CIA's secret interrogation sites for terrorist suspects to mismanagement at the Smithsonian Institution. Unnamed whistle-blowers assisted many news organizations, led by Joshua Micah Marshall's investigative blog, Talking Points Memo, in uncovering a pattern of Justice Department firings of U.S. attorneys across the country for apparently political reasons.

Just as it was with Mark Felt and other confidential sources used by Woodward and Bernstein in their Watergate reporting, few of these officials simply seek out journalists and spill all the beans.

They usually have to be painstakingly pursued and wooed, and they often are wary of providing more than snippets of information that must be pieced together over time from numerous sources for the most explosive stories. Still, it happens every day in Washington, during every administration.

But two young local reporters chasing hunches and scraps of information about a criminal conspiracy involving the highest officials in government, including the president? Could that really happen again?

There's no reason why not, even though so much has changed since 1972. New technology actually makes investigative reporting somewhat easier. We can now use computers and the Internet to search records and other information, and we can use pre-paid cell phones for conversations with confidential sources. Of course, an administration under siege would also have more sophisticated resources for investigating leaks and marshaling counter-attacks in the news media and the blogosphere.

Reporters working today on a story such as Watergate would be unlikely to be left relatively alone, along with their sources, for as long as Bob and Carl were. Now, from day one, the story would be all over the Internet, and hordes of reporters and bloggers would immediately join the chase. The story would become fodder for around-the-clock argument among the blowhards on cable television and the Internet. Opinion polls would be constantly stirring up and measuring the public's reaction.

So the conspiracy and the cover-up would unravel much more quickly—and their political impact would probably be felt much sooner. Nixon was re-elected five months after the burglary in 1972, and Watergate was not much of an issue during the campaign. That would not happen today.

In an age when the media have been turned upside-down by the biggest shifts in audiences and economic models since the advent of television, my two biggest questions about whether we could still pursue a story like Watergate center on resources and verification. Many Americans, including opinion leaders in Washington and elsewhere, simply didn't or wouldn't believe The Washington

Post's reporting about Watergate during its early months—not until we were joined by the New York Times, Newsweek, CBS News, Judge John J. Sirica, the Senate Watergate committee and the special Watergate prosecutor.

In today's cacophonous media world, in which news, rumor, opinion and infotainment from every kind of source are jumbled together and often presented indiscriminately, how would such an improbable-sounding story ever get verified?

As newsrooms rapidly shrink, will they still have the resources, steadily amassed by newspapers since Watergate, for investigative reporting that takes months and even years of sustained work?

These questions are not just about holding presidents accountable to the American people, as vital as that is. The answers could affect anyone whose conditions could be helped by great journalism, such as the wounded Iraq veterans whose care at Walter Reed Hospital has been greatly improved because of investigative reporting by Dana Priest and Anne Hull in The Post.

Despite the fame that came to Woodward and Bernstein after the book and movie “All the President's Men,” these questions aren't about the greater glory of journalists either. In fact, Woodward, Bernstein and The Post were under almost constant attack during the early days of Watergate. Near the end of “Frost/Nixon,” when Langella's Nixon refers to those “sons of whores” in the news media, a friend turned to me and whispered, “He's talking about you.” I played only a supporting role in editing some of our Watergate coverage, but even after all these years, that still felt good.



Letters to the Editor

The great work of the Planet Earth

It was 40 years ago on Christmas eve of 1968 after I had just moved close to the University of North Carolina campus in a coal-fired little Piedmont house that we watched Apollo 8's pictures of the Planet Earth from the moon. Goose pimples accompanied sentiments that would lead me later to answer to the question, “Where do you live?” with “My address is Saipan; my home is planet Earth.”

French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's writings and his “sense of the Earth” got grounded in profound earthbound significance then, particularly the quote, “The Age of Nations is past. The task before us now, if we would not perish, is to build the Earth.” The year would see hawkish Nixon trouncing Humphrey for the U.S. presidency after promising an end to the American incursion into Vietnam. A resigned and weary nation would also live through the riotous aftermaths of the MLK Jr. and RFK assassinations, but this naïve and idealistic rural boy from Northern Luzon in the Philippines found time to sing Lennon's *Give Peace a Chance* and *Imagine* in student marches downtown Greensboro oblivious of the fact that the city had the most active klavern of the Ku Klux Klan of America at the time!

Colleagues around the world, with diverse political persuasions, would later sing together in the '70s—“*Oh, We behold the wonder of our time: A fragile planet hurled in space. New worlds of wisdom, nations unfolding, all the peoples of the earth join in the common march. We have turned the universe within, the vantage of the void our way. New worlds converging, courage emerging: burst the barriers of time with tools to build the earth. ... All the earth belongs to all of us. And all of us belong.*”

Participatory democracy and the parliament of the street met up with the rising environmental movement. Brit James Lovelock proposed the Gaia hypothesis to the scientific community that projected the image of the living and non-living parts of the earth forming a complex interacting system that can be thought of as a single organism. Aussie Peter Russell would later acknowledge human's participation in an organic Gaia as that of the brain, albeit, a cancerous one, and one only had to look at the heavily polluted City of Los Angeles to recognize the truth of the assertion.

In the '90s, Greensboro native Thomas Berry, a monastic priest in the tradition of Chardin, wrote *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*, to cap his ecozoic era trilogy that began with *The Dream of the Earth* and *The Universe Story: A celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (with physicist Brian Swimme).

To rephrase Semitic holy writ, “the fear of the Way Life Is, is the beginning of wisdom.” “Fear” in this sense means deep concern and care for reality, more in the nature of awe than being afraid.

Forty years later, this finds expression to this earthbound wayfarer in the proposed Marine Monument in the Marianas that now awaits GWB's signature.

In the first instance, my support is not just in the protection and conservation of marine and land life in the three northernmost islands of the Commonwealth, along with the submerged geologic formations in the Marianas Trench. The three islands are already constitutional reserves and NOAA already has jurisdiction over the economic zones surrounding the islands. Never mind that WesPac has historically protected the interests of longline fleets and other extractive industries; we can allow its concerns to be legitimately addressed in an open consensus table.

The possibility ushered by the symbolic power of the marine monument harkens more to the resurgence of the human spirit, for to be in awe of Gaia is to dare reinvent the human, to care to construct a viable human presence on this planet, including its islands. It is not primarily for the sake of the fishes that we care, it is in the rediscovery of our human soul that is at stake. Berry writes, “The human is neither an addendum to the universe nor an intrusion into the universe. We are quintessentially integral with the universe. In ourselves the universe is revealed to itself as we are revealed in the universe.”

Oliver Morton of San Francisco writes his week (reprinted by *The New York Times*) to remind us that the Earthrise picture of the lonely planet hurled in space, isolated, small and fragile, is in the cultural mind's imagination. In fact, the planet is a third of the chronos of the universe, and has had continuous life on it for 3.5 billion years.

Human life and other creaturely forms of life may be threatened by extinction, but life on the planet, objectively, will go on. For us certified tree-huggers, this is good news. We no longer need to be avatars aflame with our strategic scimitars to smite the spoilers of our pristine environment; we need not be saviors of anything at all. All we need is to rediscover what Berry wrote of the bondedness of the natives of the North American continent to Mother Nature: “The peoples who lived here first, with their unique experience of this continent have much to teach us concerning intimate presence to this continent, how we should dwell here in some mutually enhancing relation with the land.”

In our case, I will add, “and with the sea.” Indeed, both the traditions of the *taotao tano* (people of the land) and the *taotao tasi* (people of the sea) embody within its intellectual, emotional, and imaginative capacities, a oneness with nature, temporarily disjointed by post-medieval science but in rapid recovery by today's earth science. Fritjof Capra's *Tao of Physics* is not foreign to our native “sense of the earth.” It is not our task to save the

earth, only to love it!

This week, I dipped my toes into the lagoon along Beach Road. I used to swim there when there was still a recognizable waistline in my booty, and hoping to recover the shape, I had designs of scheduling my workout again in the buoyancy of the lagoon waters. But my toes stepped on two inches of slimy gooey stuff that was not there before, and felt alarmingly funny between my toes. Until I can check with CRM what the “creatures” are, I shall stay away from the shoreline awhile. I suspect that visiting tourists have the same response on the lagoon as I did!

This has implications to Perry Tenorio's programs at the Visitors' Authority. We would move away from just marketing the islands as a gathered collection of objects/subjects of diverse ethnicity, devising ways to divest them of their accumulated self-hoods expressed in yens, wons, yuans and rubles, but rather as the site of continuous celebrative communions of human lives, and other valuable creatures on land and sea. That we must welcome tourists is a no-brainer but that we might engage travelers who welcome the opportunity of communing with fellow denizens of the planet and their immediate environment takes some loving doing.

“Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness...the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man (sic) will have discovered fire,” wrote Chardin. Here's my earthrise slogan: “Love it. It's your life!” I'm working on making love to the lagoon!

Jaime Vergara
via e-mail

Useless driver's licenses

I'm having a problem changing my CNMI driver's license (new issue; hard type) to Washington's. I was told that such driver's license doesn't meet their standards or whatever and that I need to contact the CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles, which I did.

My concern is that I need to pay \$20 for my traffic clearance at the Clerk of Court and obtain an abstract from BMV. Why issue such a fancy driver's license when they're useless in other parts of the world? It is very clear that whoever's in-charge of the issuance of CNMI driver's license is not doing the job correctly. I feel so stupid to pay for the extra \$20 from my empty pocket to get my traffic clearance just because of a simple silly mistake from someone who don't know what he or she is doing.

Michael K. Somorang
Lakewood, Washington

Business

Retail gasoline prices drift to 58-month low

Retail gasoline prices tumbled Friday to the lowest level in nearly five years. And while crude futures rose, analysts believed it was a temporary pause in an extended, downward arc as the recession spreads.

"We're paying about a billion dollars per day less than we were in July" for gasoline, said Tom Kloza, publisher and chief oil analyst at Oil Price Information Service. "We could probably bail out some banks and maybe even some of the auto companies with the savings."

But cheap gas is bittersweet news for an economy that shed millions of

jobs this year. Pump prices were driven down mostly because Americans are staying home more. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters said the travel habits of Americans are "fundamentally changing" as drivers clocked 9 billion fewer miles in October, even as gas prices plunged.

New evidence that OPEC members had cut production and a weaker dollar boosted crude prices Friday in light trading.

Light, sweet crude for February delivery rose \$2.36, more than 6 percent, to close at \$37.71 a barrel on the New

York Mercantile Exchange. Trading was closed Thursday for Christmas.

In London, February Brent crude rose \$1.76 to settle at \$38.45 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange. Tumbling crude prices have led to enormous declines in the price of retail gasoline.

At the pump, retail gas prices fell six-tenths of a penny overnight to a new national average of \$1.642 a gallon Friday, well below the year-ago average of \$2.981 a gallon, according to AAA and the Oil Price Information Service. The last time retail prices dipped this low was in February 2004, Kloza said. (AP)

TakeCare Foundation presents \$10,500 in grants

The TakeCare Foundation presented \$10,500 in grants to three local, non-profit organizations including the Guam Diabetes Association, The Salvation Army Guam Corps—Lighthouse Recovery Center, and Big Brothers Big Sisters Guam on Nov. 19, 2008, at the TakeCare Administrative Offices in Tamuning.

The Foundation is composed of em-

ployees of TakeCare Insurance and the FHP Health Center who are devoted to charitable and educational causes that enhance the health, wellness and welfare of individuals, families and the public at large. It is unique because it is employee-driven.

TakeCare and FHP employees play a major role in assisting with the contributions and the selection process.

Through their kind donations, The TakeCare Foundation anticipates the joy they are able to bring to so many people.

The TakeCare Foundation grant presentations occur in two cycles, in June and December, and invites all non-profit organizations to apply for the Foundation Grant at <http://www.takecareasia.com/tcfoundation.html>. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TakeCare Employee Foundation donates \$3,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters Guam. From left to right: Don Fetherman, TakeCare Executive VP and CFO; Sylvia Duenas, TakeCare Foundation chairperson; Vanessa Estella, Big Brothers Big Sisters Guam executive director; Flom Santos, TakeCare Foundation member; Ann Roth, Big Brothers Big Sisters board member; Philippe Gerling, Big Brothers Big Sisters board member; and Alicia Iseke, Sr. VP Finance and Operations.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TakeCare Employee Foundation donates \$5,000 to the Guam Diabetes Association. From left to right: Don Fetherman, TakeCare Executive VP and CFO; Alicia Iseke, Sr. VP Finance and Operations; Carl Butler, Guam Diabetes Association; Winnie Butler, Guam Diabetes Association; Ginny Caceres, Guam Diabetes Association; Joe Taitague, Guam Diabetes Association; Sylvia Dueñas, TakeCare Foundation chairperson; and Carlene Rios, TakeCare Foundation member.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Japan factory output has biggest fall on record

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's contracting economy got a slew of bad news Friday when government figures showed that industrial production plunged by its biggest margin on record in November, the jobless rate jumped and household spending fell. Output at the nation's manufacturers tumbled 8.1 percent from October, the largest drop since Tokyo began measuring such data in 1953, as Japan's automakers and others slashed production to cope with slowing global demand. A government survey predicted further declines of 8 percent in December and 2.1 percent in January. The drop in factory production is nearly double the previous biggest decline of 4.3 percent in January 2001, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Earlier this week, trade data showed that exports plunged a record 26.7 percent in November.

Amazon says 2008 holiday season was 'best ever'

SEATTLE (AP)—Online retailer Amazon.com Inc. called this holiday season its "best ever," saying Friday that it saw a 17 percent increase in orders on its busiest day—a rare piece of good news in a season that has been far from merry for most retailers, including online businesses. Amazon customers ordered more than 6.3 million items on Dec. 15, compared with roughly 5.4 million on its peak day last year, the company said. It shipped more than 5.6 million products on its best day, a 44 percent rise over 2007, when it shipped about 3.9 million on its busiest day. The company did not provide dollar figures and wouldn't say whether the average value of orders had changed, and the jumps it reported Friday are in line with increases Amazon has seen since it started releasing the figures in 2002. Amazon's best-sellers included the Nintendo Wii game console, Samsung's 52-inch LCD HDTV and Apple Inc.'s iPod touch.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
TakeCare Employee Foundation donates \$2,500 to The Salvation Army Guam Corps. From left to right: Don Fetherman, TakeCare Executive VP and CFO; Sylvia Duenas, TakeCare Foundation chairperson; Mary McEwen, Development Coordinator, The Salvation Army; Melanie Milagroso, TakeCare Foundation member; and Alicia Iseke, Senior VP Finance and Operations.

Chinese dairies to compensate melamine victims

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese dairy companies that sold melamine-tainted milk are ready to pay compensation to the families of the nearly 300,000 children who became ill or died from drinking contaminated infant formula, a state news agency reported Saturday. Twenty-two dairy producers will make a one-time cash payment to the victims' families, China's Dairy Industry Association announced, although it did not disclose an amount, the official Xinhua News agency said. "The money for compensation is in place now and will soon be handed to the people who have custody of the sickened children through various channels," the association said. The group did not specify a date. In one of the worst food-safety scandals ever to hit China, at least six babies died and some 294,000 other children suffered kidney and urinary problems from drinking formula contaminated with the industrial chemical.

Hospitals ill from more bad debt, credit troubles

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—Gainesville's first community hospital has been on life support since the Shands Healthcare system in northern Florida bought it a dozen years ago. Now, because of the recession, the plug is being pulled on 80-year-old, money-losing Shands AGH. Next fall, its eight-hospital not-for-profit parent company will shut the 220-bed hospital and shift staff and patients to a newer, bigger teaching hospital nearby as part of an effort to save \$65 million over three years across the system. Like many U.S. hospitals, Shands is being squeezed by tight credit, higher borrowing costs, investment losses and a jump in patients—many recently unemployed or otherwise underinsured—not paying their bills. All that has begun to trigger more hospital closings—from impoverished Newark, N.J., to wealthy Beverly Hills, Calif.—as well as layoffs, other cost-cutting and scrapping or delaying building projects.

Nation

Obama's Hawaii retreat loses power for 11 hours

HONOLULU (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama's Hawaiian vacation was darkened for 11 hours Friday night and early Saturday when a power outage enveloped the island of Oahu.

Obama, wife Michelle, and daughters Malia and Sasha are staying in a \$9 million, five-bedroom oceanfront house near downtown Honolulu. Power to the compound went out around 7 p.m. Friday and was restored just before 6 a.m. Saturday, about the time as that of the neighbors, Obama spokesman Ben LaBolt said.

"The Obama family is grateful for the offers of assistance from local officials," LaBolt said.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann said three generators had been installed earlier for Obama's rented compound. A fourth generator sent by Hawaiian Electric Co. was turned away, he said.

"He replied he didn't need anything, was grateful for our offer and was going to put his family to bed,"

said Hannemann, who did not talk with Obama directly.

Transition officials would not say if generators had been installed, but an aide said no generators were used and the Obamas spent the evening in the dark.

Obama aides initially refused to release a timeline of events, such as when power was lost and restored. They have declined to discuss specific preparations for the president-elect's 12-day visit, citing security concerns.

A White House spokesman said Saturday that officials would brief Obama on the situation in the Middle East. Israel launched airstrikes into the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and the regional violence has killed more than 200 people. Israeli officials said it was retaliation for Hamas' rocket attacks.

Obama has received security briefings on the buildup of troops between India and Pakistan. He also spoke with Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice on the conflict between Hamas and Israel.

On Saturday, Obama returned to his vacation routine: a workout at the local Marine Corps Base Hawaii gym and a quick "hello" to the military families who stood across the parking lot from his motorcade.

Michelle Obama and friends from Chicago—Valerie Jarrett, Eric Whitaker and Martin Nesbitt—joined the president-elect. Obama has skipped working out only one day—Christmas—on the base since he arrived in Hawaii on Dec. 20.

Obama and his family have tried to keep a low profile during the vacation, although the man who becomes president on Jan. 20 is finding that difficult. Although the president-elect has no public schedule, his infrequent trips to play golf and grab quick lunches have drawn dozens of gawkers who want to catch a glimpse of Obama, who was born and raised on the island.

Quintuplets born at New York hospital

A set of quintuplets was born Saturday at Staten Island University Hospital, spokesman Christian Preston said. He said the four girls, one boy and their mother were doing well.

Preston declined to give the family's name, but Tony Scherillo told the Staten Island Advance the parents are his daughter and son-in-law, Jamie and Kevin Ferrante.

"Everybody was ecstatic" on learning that the new parents were expecting five babies, said Scherillo, 67. "Nobody could believe it."

The babies—delivered within 6 minutes of each other by Caesarean section—ranged in weight from 1 pound, 8 ounces, to about 2 pounds, 4 ounces, the newspaper said. It gave their names as Allesia Louise, Amanda Frances, Ella Lilliana, Emily Ann and Matthew Sabatino.

Scherillo said his daughter had not used fertility treatments, which have made multiple births more common in recent decades.



President-elect Barack Obama holds a child as he greets onlookers after working out at the Semper Fit Center at Marine Corp Base Hawaii in Kailua, Hawaii Saturday, Dec. 27, 2008. AP

4 kids, 3 adults killed by Philadelphia house fire

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Dozens of Liberian immigrants mourned Saturday at a house where seven members of their community died in a fire that a survivor said started when a kerosene heater spilled fuel and exploded as it was being moved outdoors.

Authorities have not released the names of all the victims, but fire survivor Harris Murphy said those trapped in the basement blaze were part of the large Liberian enclave in southwest Philadelphia.

The blaze broke out around 10:45 p.m. Friday in a three-story brick duplex and killed three adults and four children, including a 1-year-old boy, fire department spokesman Chief Daniel Williams said.

Fire officials said six victims were found huddled together in the front of the basement, one of them cradling the baby. The seventh was found near the



Members of the local Liberian community in southwest Philadelphia console each other outside the house where a deadly fire Friday night killed seven people Saturday, Dec. 27, 2008. AP

basement door.

The boy was later pronounced dead at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

The medical examiner said three of the children died of smoke inhalation and one adult died of smoke inhalation and burns. Four victims were identified as Henry W. Gbokolo, 54, of Yeadon; 8-year-old Ramere Markese Wright-Dosso; 6-year-old Mariam Iyanya Dosso, and 1-year-old Zyhire Xzavier Wright-Teah. All lived in the home.

Four people survived the fire, including Murphy, 35, who lives down the street but was watching a movie with others at the home when the flames erupted.

Fire marshals have not yet released the cause of the blaze, but Murphy said it started after a woman added fuel to a kerosene heater and, when it became too hot, tried to move it outside through

the basement's only door.

Some of the flaming liquid spilled out and set the carpet on fire, Murphy said.

Police: Pa. man is shot for making noise during movie

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—A man enraged by a noisy family sitting near him in a movie theater on Christmas night shot the father of the family in the arm, police said.

James Joseph Cialella, 29, of Philadelphia, told the man's family to be quiet, then threw popcorn at the man's son, police said. The victim told police that Cialella was walking toward his family when he stood up and was shot.

Detectives called to the United Artists Riverview Stadium theater in South Philadelphia found Cialella carrying the weapon, a .380-caliber handgun, in his waistband, police said.

Cialella faces six charges that include attempted murder and aggravated assault. He remained in custody Saturday. Police said bail had been set, but they did not know the amount.

said Marisa Kollias, spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Transportation. "We're getting rid of one problem, the ice, but we're getting another problem with the flooding."

The National Weather Service posted flood watches and warnings Saturday for parts of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and Missouri. As much as 2 inches of rain fell in two hours during the night in west-central Illinois, the National Weather Service reported Saturday.

And as warm air collided with cold, the weather service posted tornado watches for parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois and Kansas.

A powerful storm swept across a wide swath of south and central Illinois during the afternoon, packing wind gusts of 60 to 70 mph, said National Weather Service meteorologist Patrick Bak. Storms also pro-

Lt. Frank Vanore called the incident "scary that it gets to that level of violence from being too noisy during a movie."

Vanore said the 31-year-old victim from suburban Yeadon was hospitalized in stable condition after the shooting. His name had not been released.

It was not immediately known whether Cialella had a lawyer. A woman who answered a call to Cialella's home number Saturday declined to comment.

A theater manager referred calls to Regal Entertainment Group spokesman Dick Westerling, who did not immediately return a phone message Saturday.

Police could not confirm what movie was playing in the theater, but The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that it was "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."

duced hail, and the weather service office in St. Louis received reports of funnel clouds.

In the Chicago area, repairs to some power lines were being slowed by flooding at ComEd substations, said spokesman Jeff Burdick.

Winds knocked out power to 63,600 ComEd customers Saturday, Burdick said. Of those, 55,000 had power restored by Saturday evening.

High winds left 42,000 people in western Missouri without electricity; power had been restored to most by Saturday evening.

After subzero temperatures in places earlier in the week, Saturday morning readings were in the 40s as far north as Cheboygan, Mich., at the top of the state's Lower Peninsula, the weather service said. However, up to 7 inches of snow is possible in the state Sunday, the agency said.

Midwest snow could cause floods as weather warms

CHICAGO (AP)—Rain and rapidly rising temperatures accompanied by thick fog threatened to cause flooding

Saturday in the Midwest after days of Arctic cold, heavy snow and ice.

Thick ice on roads that contributed

to dozens of deaths had thawed and mountains of snow turned into pools and streams of water. "It's a Catch 22,"



Ray Poe walks to the end of his driveway after being flooded for nine days on Willow Drive due to an ice back up in the Grand River, Saturday, Dec. 27, 2008 in Grand Rapids, Mich. AP

Asia

Pakistan seeks to diminish tensions after troops move

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan told India on Saturday it did not want war and was committed to fighting terrorism—a move apparently aimed at reducing tensions after Pakistan moved troops toward their shared border.

Intelligence officials said Friday that the army was redeploying thousands of troops from the

country's fight against militants along the Afghan border to the Indian frontier—an alarming scenario for the West as it tries to get Pakistan to neutralize the al-Qaida threat.

Islamabad also announced it was canceling all military leave—the latest turn of the screw in the rising tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors following last

month's terror attack on the Indian financial capital of Mumbai.

India has blamed Pakistani militants for the terrifying three-day siege. Pakistan's recently elected civilian government has demanded that India back up the claim with better evidence but has also said it is committed to fighting the "cancer" of terrorism.

Southeast Asia remembers tsunami on anniversary

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Southeast Asia's tsunami-ravaged coral reefs have bounced back with surprising speed, according to a study released Friday, four years after the deadly waves hit.

The findings came as communities across the Indian Ocean remembered the disaster that struck Dec. 26, 2004 with prayers, songs and tears. About 230,000 people were killed in a dozen countries

when a magnitude 9.0 earthquake triggered the tsunami.

Surveys of coral reefs after the tsunami showed that up to one-third were damaged and experts predicted it would take a decade for them to fully recover.

Scientists from the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society, working with the Indonesian government and the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral

Reef Studies, said their examination of 60 sites on 497 miles (800 kilometers) of coastline along Indonesia's Aceh province showed the reefs were bouncing back.

"On the 4th anniversary of the tsunami, this is a great story of ecosystem resilience and recovery," said Stuart Campbell, coordinator of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Indonesia Marine Program.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Tardy air traffic controllers suspended

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Five air traffic controllers who were late or absent from work a day after Christmas were suspended after two flights were forced to circle a southern airport because no one was manning the control tower, Philippine civil aviation officials said Saturday. A Philippine Airlines jet from Manila with 156 passengers arrived early Friday morning at Zamboanga city's airport but was forced to circle for nearly 30 minutes before being allowed to land, Ramon Atilano, PAL's Zamboanga manager, told The Associated Press. A smaller, Cebu Pacific airline turbo plane from Cebu city that arrived minutes ahead of the PAL flight had to land on its own, Zamboanga airport manager Celso Bayabos said. Bayabos said the tower was not manned for 40 minutes. The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines said it has suspended five controllers and ordered an investigation into the incident.

Thousands mark Bhutto death anniversary

GARHI KHUDA BAKHSH, Pakistan (AP)—Wailing and beating their chests, tens of thousands of people paid homage to Benazir Bhutto Saturday on the one-year anniversary of her assassination—an event that dashed U.S. hopes the moderate Muslim politician would regain power and galvanize the campaign against al-Qaida. The commemoration came amid heightened tensions with India over the Mumbai terror attacks and a Pakistani troop buildup along their shared border, though Pakistan's leaders used the occasion to call for peace. Bhutto's widower, President Asif Ali Zardari, did not mention the troop movement in a speech honoring his wife, but insisted Pakistan was battling the "cancer" of terrorism. "We ourselves have accepted that we have a cancer. Yes we will cure it," said Zardari. Bhutto was killed in a gun-and-suicide bomb attack on Dec. 27, 2007, as she was leaving a campaign rally in the garrison town of Rawalpindi, just outside the capital of Islamabad.

China targets pirates in groundbreaking mission

GUANGZHOU, China (AP)—Chinese warships headed toward Somali waters Friday to

combat piracy, the first time the communist country has sent ships on a mission that could involve fighting so far beyond its territorial waters. The deployment to the Gulf of Aden, which has been plagued by increasingly bold pirate attacks in recent months, marks a major step in the navy's evolution from mostly guarding China's coasts to patrolling waters far from home. The move was welcomed by the U.S. military, which has been escorting cargo ships in the region along with India, Russia and the European Union. But analysts predicted the Chinese intervention could be troubling to some Asian nations who might see it as a sign of the Chinese military becoming more aggressive.

Elevator accident leaves 17 dead in central China

BEIJING (AP)—State media says at least 17 workers have been killed and one seriously injured when an elevator suddenly dropped to the ground at a construction site in central Hunan province. The official Xinhua News Agency reports the accident occurred at 7:30 a.m. Saturday at the construction site for a real estate project called "Shanghai City" in the provincial capital of Changsha. Xinhua says the injured man has been sent to the hospital for treatment. The project is owned by Dongfanghong construction group, established in 1965. No other details were available.

Blast in central China leaves 15 dead; 9 injured

BEIJING (AP)—An explosion in central China's Henan province killed 15 people and injured nine others Saturday. The blast occurred around 1 a.m. in Donggancheng village in northeast Henan, the official Xinhua News Agency said. An initial investigation showed explosives intended for civilian use went off, Xinhua said citing the provincial work safety supervision administration. The explosives, used for small-scale demolition, were illegally stored at a home when they ignited, destroying more than 10 neighboring houses, Xinhua said. It was unclear what sparked the blast. Police were searching for the man who owned the explosives, Xinhua said. Rescue operations were under way. No other details were immediately available.

World

Israel assault on Hamas kills at least 230 people

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

(AP)—Israeli warplanes rained more than 100 tons of bombs on security sites in Hamas-ruled Gaza Saturday and early Sunday, killing at least 230 people in one of the Mideast conflict's bloodiest assaults in decades. The government said the open-ended campaign was aimed at stopping rocket attacks that have traumatized southern Israel.

Most of the casualties were security forces, but Palestinian officials said at least 15 civilians were among the dead. More than 400 people were also wounded. The unprecedented assault sparked protests and condemnations throughout the Arab world, and many of Israel's Western allies urged restraint, though the U.S. blamed Hamas for the fighting.

But there was no end in sight. The first round of strikes



AP
A Palestinian security force officer from Hamas reacts as he stands over others that were killed at the site of an Israeli missile strike at the security headquarters in Gaza City, Saturday, Dec. 27, 2008.

Israeli and wounding six.

Hundreds of Israeli infantry and armored corps troops headed for the Gaza border in preparation for a possible ground invasion, military officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity under army guidelines.

Car bombs in Iraq kill 25, wound 64

BAGHDAD (AP)—A pair of car bombs killed more than two dozen people on Saturday, shattering a recent period of calm and serving as a grim reminder that recent gains remain fragile as Iraq prepares to take over security responsibilities for much of the country.

The attacks included one in the Iraqi capital—the first major attack in more than a week—that killed at least 22 people and injured 54.

In other violence, a sus-

pected al-Qaida in Iraq fugitive was killed in a gunbattle with police in the western city of Ramadi, police said. He was one of four suspected insurgents who escaped during a jailbreak and ensuing riot at a Ramadi police station on Friday that left six policemen and seven insurgents dead.

Although violence has dropped by more than 80 percent around Iraq and particularly Baghdad, the U.S. military has repeatedly said the

Agencies: Zimbabwe malnutrition, cholera worse

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)—International aid agencies warned on Saturday that Zimbabwe's humanitarian crisis is deepening, with a sharp rise in acute child malnutrition and a worsening cholera epidemic.

President Robert Mugabe's government has acknowledged the collapse of Zimbabwe's health system, but he also claimed earlier this

month that the epidemic had been brought under control and that there was "no cholera" in the country.

The country is struggling desperately with a long-term economic crisis and has been paralyzed by a political crisis over a so-far unsuccessful attempt at power-sharing. International observers have raised concerns about the increasing clampdown on opposition to

Volunteers spend a week on horse rescue in Canada

MCKBRIE, British Columbia (AP)—Two frostbitten, emaciated horses were recovering inside a warm barn on Saturday thanks to volunteers who spent the week before Christmas digging the animals out of snow in the mountains of northeastern British Columbia.

Birgit Stutz said Saturday the rescuers cheered when they finally finished digging a half-mile escape route through the snow for the animals. The horses had

been abandoned by a hunter and faced almost certain death.

Stutz said the horses eagerly accepted being bridled and seemed to know they were safe as volunteers led them on a seven-hour hike down the mountain in freezing temperatures on Tuesday.

Stutz said about 40 or 50 people took part in the rescue over the course of a week.

"It was a big effort," Stutz said in a telephone interview.

Mugabe, who is under severe pressure to step down or solve the political impasse over allocation of Cabinet posts.

Prominent Zimbabwean peace activist Jestina Mukoko is one of a group of activists detained for allegedly plotting to overthrow Mugabe. She had been missing for three weeks before she appeared in court. The plot has been widely dismissed as fabricated.

Stutz said the horses were discovered on Dec. 15 by two local residents. They were above the tree line and had no shelter at first.

Logan Jeck and a friend stumbled across the horses while out looking for some snowmobiles left behind by tourists who had gotten stuck during a trip to the back country on the side of Mount Renshaw—about 750 miles northeast of Vancouver.

Health & Fitness

By JEANNINE STEIN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Between parties and shopping, time is short these days. But that doesn't mean your exercise routine has to be second-rate. A 20- to 30-minute workout done at a high intensity can increase the heart rate and tone muscles equally as well as a longer workout done at a lower intensity.

"Who made the rule that a workout has to be an hour?" asks Amy Dixon, group fitness manager at Equinox in Santa Monica, Calif. "If people can wrap their heads around the fact that it's OK to do a shorter workout, especially if you do it right, that's all you need."

The key, these trainers say, is to keep moving. Taking breaks between exercises—even short ones—will lower the heart rate and not provide as much calorie burn. While some of these routines require equipment such as cardio machines or light weights, you can easily make your substitutions. Run at a nearby track, park or playground and use stairs and bars for exercises such as pull-ups. Use soup cans for weights. And scale back or increase the level of intensity according to your fitness level. No need to be a superhero—or a slug—just because it's the holidays.

ANGELA STOPELL
Master trainer at 24 Hour Fitness in Chino, Calif.

We'd start with five minutes of cardio, and that could be on a machine such as an elliptical trainer, a stair climber or a treadmill. If you're exercising first thing and using this as a warm-up, do it at a low intensity. If you're already warmed up, choose a moderate to vigorous intensity that gets your heart rate up.

Then do walking lunges for five minutes. This uses all the leg muscles, is a great fat burner and gets your heart rate up. You're also using your core. If you're a beginner, do stationary lunges, holding onto a chair if necessary. After doing 10, alternate between those and 10 ab crunches. Do three sets of each.

Get on the treadmill for five minutes at 3.5 miles per hour (or a moderately fast pace—not a slow walk). At the same time, do biceps curls and shoulder presses with light weights (3 to 5 pounds), or no weights. When you do this while you're moving, you get a better calorie burn and you're toning the muscles. You should always concentrate on your form. For beginners, only do this if you're comfort-

Fast workout for the holidays

able on the treadmill, and slow the speed if necessary.

Next, go to a mat and do push-ups—straight-legged if you're advanced, or on your knees if you're not. Do 10 to 20 depending on how conditioned you are. Alternate those with triceps bench dips on a chair, also doing 10 to 20. Do three sets of each.

Then it's on to the StepMill (a stair climber with rotating steps) for five minutes. You can push it here a little bit because you're warmed up, but beginners who have never done this before can stay at Level 1. If that machine isn't available, you can use another form of stair climber, or just go up and down some stairs.

After that, do 25 standing squats with no weight, then 50 side bends. For the side bends, stand with feet hip-width apart and bend your torso from side to side, trying to reach below your knees. This is for the obliques. This also brings down the heart rate a little bit.

AMY DIXON
Exercise physiologist and group fitness manager at Equinox, Santa Monica

With only 20 to 30 minutes, I would do a treadmill workout that's interval-based, alternating bouts of resting and pushing. You're going to burn the most calories, get your heart rate up and spike your metabolism.

For beginners, walk on the treadmill at a comfortable but challenging pace, and up your intensity with the incline. When you're pushing, it won't feel easy. If you're starting to feel uncomfortable, you're in the upper end of your endurance zone, so stay there

and get to know what it feels like. You shouldn't feel like you have to step off the treadmill to catch your breath. When you come down to a slower pace, you'll feel a little spike in your heart rate, but then you should be

able to ride it out.

If you're more advanced and want to run, keep your speed between 5 to 7 miles per hour and start at a 3 percent incline before increasing to about an 8 percent incline. If you're in better condition, you should be breathless on the push.

For all fitness levels, try alternating between two minutes of the easy phase and a minute of the difficult phase. Do this workout a maximum of three times a week if you're fit. For beginning exercisers or those who haven't done intervals before, do it twice a week. If you don't have a treadmill and can go outside, do hills for the hard part of the intervals, or push the pace. This can also be done on an elliptical trainer or stationary bike.

SHARON PHILLIPS
Personal trainer at Crunch, Los Angeles

I like to do short workouts, circuit-training style, moving at a relatively quick pace to keep the heart rate up, and incorporating plyometrics. Each of these sets should take about a minute, and the entire circuit should be done three times. By the third set you'll be pretty fatigued. You still want to push yourself, but also pace yourself.

For warm-ups, do sprints with push-ups. Run about the length of half a basketball court, then drop and do 10 push-ups, sprint to the other end and do 10 more push-ups. Or, run in place for 30 seconds, keeping knees high, and drop into push-ups.

Then do squats into a shoulder press using dumbbells that are a comfortable weight, or just your body weight. With feet shoulder-width apart, go into a squat position holding the dumbbells, come up and do a biceps curl with both arms, and then go into a shoulder press. Bring the weights back down and go back into a squat. For another version, go into a squat, jump into the air, come back down into a squat position again, put your hands on the ground and kick your feet out behind you, then bring them back in.

Walking lunges with a twist are next. If you have a medicine ball or other weighted object, hold it out in front of you, arms straight and at shoulder height. Twist toward the leading leg so you get a contraction in your obliques. You can also do this

with no weights, but still holding your arms up. If there's no room to do walking lunges, do them in place and alternate legs, doing the twist.

Then do a round of leapfrogs, which is a plyometric exercise. Start in a squat position, lean forward and jump, landing softly so you don't injure your knees. If there's no open space, just do jump squats in place, and again be careful with your knees. Your arms can be used for momentum, so swing them as you jump.

Pull-ups are next, and you'll need a bar, which you can find at a gym or a park. Sometimes gyms have assisted pull-up machines, which make this a little easier. This exercise really engages the core.

Now do full-body crunches with a Body Bar (a long, weighted bar), a ball or with no weight. Lie on the floor with arms and legs extended and bring the elbows and knees together. Extend them out again, keeping them about an inch off the floor.

Resolved to join a gym? Price is NOT everything

Before you sign a contract for a new gym membership, there are a few factors that take serious thinking.



By VICKY HALLETT
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Drinking too much champagne must cause spontaneous exercise. How else do you explain the annual boom in elliptical usage on Jan. 2?

But wait until the hangover wears off before you sign a contract for a new gym membership: There are a few factors that take serious thinking.

The big one is price, but that number isn't entirely straightforward.

Sure, there are bound to be new year's promos (and some December holiday specials, if you're planning to get a head start this week), but the deals don't have to stop there.

We've heard from plenty of gym members who have managed to negotiate a better price than the first one that's offered. Clubs count on January to bring in massive business, so in this economy, you may find some willing to trim the enrollment fee or monthly charge.

It's no bargain, though, if you don't go. Think about location: A place that's walking distance from your home might be worth an extra 10 bucks if it translates into extra gym time.

And really consider when and how you plan to exercise. The gym near your office might be awesome Monday through Friday, but what happens if you get a hankering for Zumba over the weekend?

And what amenities does an inexpensive gym have? A measly pool or a shortage of evening classes can be deal-breakers. What if you want

personal training? Ask for schedules and quiz the management about staff credentials.

Sarah Lengyel, vice president for business development for Results, the Gym, suggests looking for staff on the gym floor, preferably of the friendly, helpful and available variety.

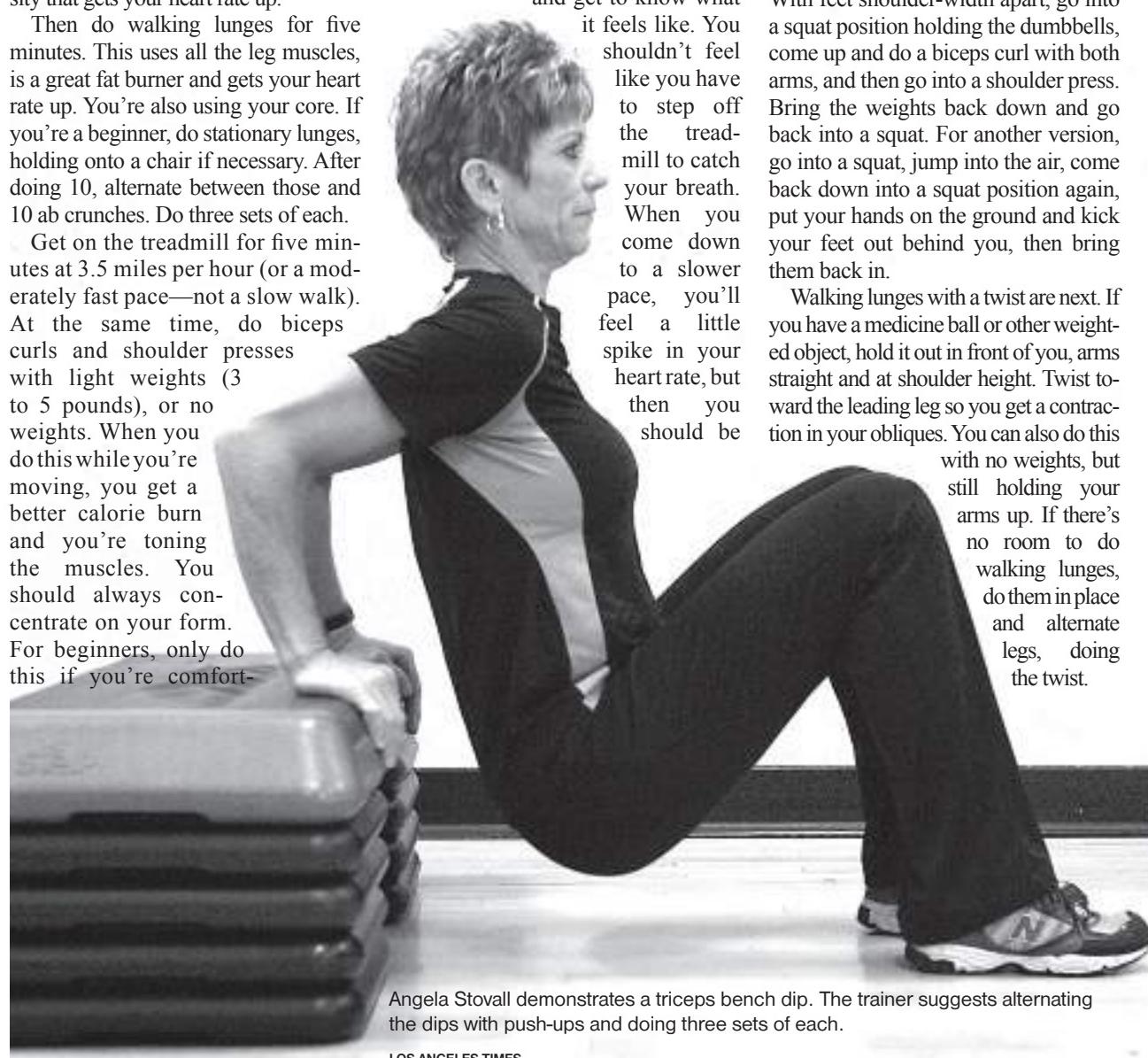
"Some clubs have folks at the front desk and that's it," she says. And, of course, make sure the place is clean.

Don't just peer from afar—poke around corners and pull back shower curtains. "There's no worse feeling than signing up for a gym and knowing you're grossed out by it. It's hard enough to get there in the first place," Lengyel says.

Be sure to swing by about the time you plan on doing most of your exercising. The resolution rush will make things crazier over the next few weeks, but that's no excuse for not having enough equipment to accommodate the members.

Timing might also change the vibe of a place, as a gym can morph from Zen retreat to bumping nightclub to casual community center as the day goes by. See who else is there at your time and if you'd feel comfortable sweating alongside 'em.

And, of course, check what you're signing up for. Some memberships are month-to-month, others are for a year or more, and clubs have very different policies on what happens if you move, change jobs or just want to cancel. The only traps you should have to be thinking about are your trapezius muscles.



Angela Stovall demonstrates a triceps bench dip. The trainer suggests alternating the dips with push-ups and doing three sets of each.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Life & Style

Our almost certainly unreliable predictions for

2009

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

The future hurtles toward us, then disappears when it arrives, and we are left with the overwhelming presence of the present. The year 2009 is days away. What does it hold in store?

Fewer cars.
Bio-violence.
Increased urbanization.
A more religious China.
A more secular Middle East.
And you can expect any professional knowledge to be obsolete as soon as you acquire it.

OK, don't panic. Those are our glib generalizations of forecasts made by the World Future Society, which has published its roundup of 2008's most intriguing thoughts about 2009 (and beyond) in its magazine, the Futurist.

Will any of these things come to be in 2009 or beyond?

Maybe.
Maybe not.
We won't know until the future arrives.
And by then it will be gone.

Who predicted, at the end of 2007, that the New England Patriots would lose the Super Bowl after a perfect season? That Barack Obama would be elected president after a grueling campaign? That we'd be gifted Sarah Palin and Tina Fey, and Tina Fey as Sarah Palin? That we'd be tottering toward a galactic depression?

Maybe no one.
Maybe many.

As much as we plan for the future, it can still surprise us. So, to soothe that uncertainty, check out our predictions, aspirations and fears for 2009. Don't say we didn't warn you.

Jan. 6

To save themselves future embarrassment, Illinois voters approve a proposition that abolishes the office of governor.

Jan. 20

During Barack Obama's inaugural address, his soaring oratory causes a woman to faint into the person behind her, leading to

the other 4 million people on the Mall going down like dominos.

Feb. 12

Charles Darwin celebrates his 200th birthday and issues a statement re-



vealing that he has been living on the Galapagos Islands since he faked his death. He signs the statement, "The Fittest."

Feb. 17

TV broadcasts switch from analog to digital. One million senior citizens take to the streets to protest the sudden replacement of "Wheel of Fortune" with static.

March 2

Apple releases the iCan't, a palm-size digital excuse manager.

March 11

Bailout fever reaches the soft-serve ice cream industry. Congress creates a \$43,000 bridge loan to keep the nation's vendors in business until summer arrives.

March 22

Americans who have pledged to spend the day logged out of Facebook instead spend the entire day on Facebook tracking the number of people joining the

April 12

John McCain goes on a one-man mission to track down Osama bin Laden. Within 36 hours, he finds him at the gates of hell and drags him back to face justice.

April 25

Flustered by the mounting crises at home and abroad, "No Drama" Obama becomes "No Comma" Obama as his trademark eloquence is overtaken by nervous run-on sentences.

May 24

To cut down on fuel costs and emissions, the Indianapolis 500 is changed to the Indianapolis 150.

May 27

Paula Abdul spends the middle third of the "American Idol" finale in a coma.

June 1

Conan O'Brien takes over "The Tonight Show" from Jay Leno, who expands his duties at NBC

to include anchoring the evening news broadcast and replacing David Gregory as host of "Meet the Press."

Conan continues to pull out what's left of his hair.

THREE WISE GUYS

Now available for birthdays and bar mitzvahs

By JOE HEIM, JUSTIN RUDE AND DAN ZAK

(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Joe: Well, readers, it's never easy to say goodbye, and this farewell is harder than most. Our hearts are heavy and —

Dan: Oh, God, I hope you're not going to turn this final column into a weep fest.

Joe: You don't have to call me God, Dan. And I'm sorry if I'm a bit emotional. But after five years and 260 columns, it's difficult to not feel sad about it ending.

Justin: We've only been at this for a year.

Joe: Really? Hmm. Feels longer.

Dan: And we've taken a week off on several occasions.

Joe: Whatever. I still feel sad.

Dan: No sappy goodbyes. Let's go out like Redford and Newman in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," not like Debra Winger in "Terms of Endearment." Let's just answer the most important question we've received this year.

Joe: Fine.

■ ■ ■

Dear Wise Guys: Why can't we find six-ounce cans of limeade anymore? We need them desperately for our favorite margarita recipe.—Jack

Dan: I like the image this question inspires. I imagine you, Jack, coming home from work to find your wife at the kitchen table. She looks up, her face tear-streaked, and utters, "I still can't find any." You

June 8

After dipping below 5,000, the Dow Jones industrial average is discontinued because it is depressing.

June 21

The Large Hadron Collider, the massive atom smasher near Geneva, is reactivated and swallows Switzerland before blowing a fuse.

Aug. 3

Oprah loses 20 pounds but quickly finds them.

Oct. 2

The International Olympic Committee selects Chicago as the host city of the 2016 Olympics.

Oct. 3

Chicago is stripped of its hosting status after the FBI discovers that city officials bribed the IOC.

Oct. 30

Somalian pirates hijack the boat on the "Jaws" ride at Universal Studios but are quickly disori-

ented by the mechanical shark and subdued by a quick-thinking ride operator with a fake harpoon.

Nov. 9

Russia celebrates the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall by rebuilding it.

Nov. 18

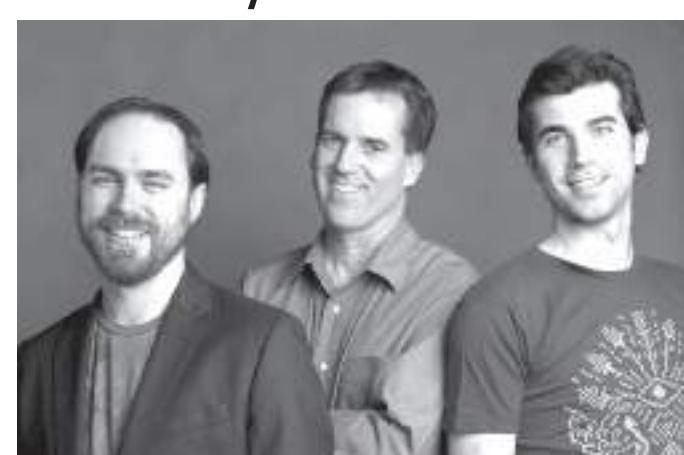
George W. Bush cuts the ribbon at his newly constructed presidential library in Dallas, walks in and mutters, "What are all those things on the shelves?" An outraged librarian quietly throws her shoes at him.

Nov. 19

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie adopt a Canadian orphan and name her Maple.

Dec. 31

With the world unsure of how to verbally abbreviate 2010 (just "ten"? "Oh-ten"? "Tenner"?), the NCAA swoops in and buys the naming rights, deeming the next 365 days "The Big Ten."



THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post offers Three Wise Guys, advice on life and other stuff from the male perspective, perpetrated by Post staffers, from left, Justin Rude, Joe Heim and Dan Zak. It may not be professional advice, but their responses to reader questions serve up a deft handling of any conceivable topic.

Joe: Thanks, Nancy. For answers to pressing questions, go where we go: Wikipedia. And, of course we will keep in touch.

Justin: If you tell us where you live, we'll stop by your house every Sunday and just hang out.

■ ■ ■

And so we bid adieu to all of our faithful, extremely attractive readers. Thank you for your questions and humor. Clip this column and save it to show your grandchildren what life used to be like. Or if you're reading this online, use a glass cutter to remove the column from your monitor. We are not so much perishing in the wildfire of newspaper cutbacks as we are taking a respite on the isle of Avalon (mythical, not New Jersey). If The Post should ever need us, we will be back—our wit polished like Excalibur—to save the world.

Three Wise Guys: I want you to know I will really miss your column. Where will I go now to get the valuable advice that you provide? Will you keep in touch?—Nancy

Publication of disputed Holocaust memoir canceled

NEW YORK (AP)—The publisher of a disputed Holocaust memoir has canceled the book, adding the name Herman Rosenblat to an increasingly long line of literary fakers and ending with a heartbreaking crash his story—embraced by Oprah Winfrey among others—of meeting his future wife at a Nazi concentration camp.

"I wanted to bring happiness to people," Rosenblat said in a statement issued Saturday through his agent, Andrea Hurst. "I brought hope to a lot of people. My motivation was to make good in this world."

Rosenblat's "Angel at the Fence" had been scheduled to come out in February, but Berkley Books, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA), withdrew the memoir following allega-

tions by scholars, friends and family members that his tale was untrue.

"Berkley Books is canceling publication of 'Angel at the Fence' after receiving new information from Herman Rosenblat's agent, Andrea Hurst," the publisher said in a statement. "Berkley will demand that the author and the agent return all money that they have received for this work."

A couple of days earlier, Berkley had offered a qualified defense of the book, saying it was a work of memory, a story whose truth was known only to the author.

Hurst released her own statement, saying that Rosenblat had acknowledged to her "that part of his memoir was not true. He'd invented the crux of this

amazing love story—about the girl at the fence who threw him an apple."

Hurst, interviewed Saturday by The Associated Press, declined to offer details of Rosenblat's book deal, but said the amount of money was "not a great deal." She said that rights to the book also had been sold to publishers in Poland, France and other countries.

Rosenblat, 79, a resident of the Miami area, was virtually unknown to the general public until the 1990s when he began speaking of how he came to know his wife, Roma Radzicky. According to Rosenblat and his wife, he was a prisoner at a sub-camp of Buchenwald in Nazi Germany and she a young Jewish girl whose family was pretending to be Christian and

lived nearby.

For months, they would meet on opposite sides of a barbed-wire fence, where she would sneak him apples and bread. Rosenblat was then transferred to another camp and the two lost touch, until the 1950s, when they were reunited by accident—on a blind date—in New York. They soon married and earlier this year celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

The Rosenblats were interviewed twice over the years by Winfrey, who has called their romance "the single greatest love story ... we've ever told

on the air." They have inspired a children's book and a feature film adaptation is scheduled to begin next year.

The film's producer, Harris Salomon of Atlantic Overseas Pictures, has vehemently defended Rosenblat and told the AP on Saturday that "the film will proceed."

Unlike such discredited Holocaust memoirists as Misha De Fonseca ("Misha: A Memoire of the Holocaust Years") and Benjamin Wilkomirski ("Fragments"), Rosenblat is indeed a survivor and records prove that he was at the Buchenwald camp.

"All of the story about Herman in the concentration camps and the love and survival of him and his brothers, he states is true," Hurst, his agent, said in a statement.

But scholars doubted the love story, noting that the layout of the sub-camp made such an encounter at the fence virtually unthinkable (They would have met right by an SS barracks). A recent article in *The New Republic* quoted friends and family members who were outraged by Rosenblat, so much so that one of his brothers stopped speaking to him.

Hillary Waugh, prolific mystery writer, dies at 88

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—Novelist Hillary Waugh, whose prolific career introduced generations of mystery readers to small-town intrigue and police techniques rooted in real investigations, has died in Connecticut. He was 88.

Waugh died Dec. 8 in a nursing facility in Torrington after a brief illness, his son Lawrence said Saturday.

Waugh's dozens of novels—numbering almost 50, including some he wrote under pen names—earned him a Grand Master Award in 1989 from the Mystery Writers of America.

The honor places him in the company of such writers as Stephen King, Mary Higgins Clark, Mickey Spillane, Alfred Hitchcock and Agatha Christie.

Hillary Baldwin Waugh was born and raised in New Haven and was graduated from Yale University in 1942. He served as a U.S. Naval Air Corps aviator in World War II. His avocations ranged from boxing and badminton to song writing and newspaper cartooning.

His first novel, "Madame Will Not Dine Tonight," was published in 1947 and began a long string of mysteries in which the characters used real police techniques to solve mysteries.

That was a clear departure from the genre in which a private detective, squirreling away facts and relying on his or her wits and instinct, emerged with all the answers.

"I was tired of reading about these super-detectives and a police force composed of a bunch of bumbling idiots," Waugh told The New York Times in 1990.

"I wanted to get away from the neat little corpses with the perfect bullet through the head, and instead write a story as it really happened."

One of his early works, the 1952 novel "Last Seen Wearing," is listed by the Mystery Writers of America as one of the top 100 mystery novels of all time.

Waugh used Connecticut as a

setting for many novels, changing town names slightly but enjoying the juxtaposition of bucolic small-town life against the commotion and suspicion caused by crimes in tight-knit communities. He had lived for decades in Guilford,

where he was elected in 1971 to a two-year term as town first selectman.

Besides his fictional work,

Hillary Waugh wrote a 1990 book, "Hillary Waugh's Guide to Mysteries and Mystery Writing."



This 2002 photo provided by Lawrence Waugh shows Hillary Baldwin Waugh.

Message of Appreciation

VICENTE DIAZ MAGOFNA
fondly known as "Benco"
(Ben Badu)
August 13, 1950 - December 14, 2008

No words can adequately express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to all our relatives and friends from near and far for the kind expression and support throughout our sorrow upon the loss of our dearest and loving husband, father, grandfather and brother.

Your thoughtfulness in expressing your sympathy and condolences have greatly helped us in bearing the sorrow and our loss. Your words of comfort have given us the strength and courage to endure our trying times.

To all who have helped us in one way or another, please be assured that you will always be remembered in our hearts, thoughts and prayers.

May God Bless Us All.
Thank You and Si Yu's Maase.

The Family



In this Sept. 25, 2008 file photo, Herman and Roma Rosenblat pose for a photo in their North Miami Beach, Fla. home.

Memorias Guinaiya para Ila Defunto:

Felix (Leling) Masga Mendiola

Julio Dia 17, 1950 - Decembre Dia 24, 2008

Lahen: †Felipe Camacho yan †Joaquina Masga Mendiola

Yetnun: †Zacharias Muna yan †Natividad Fejeran Tudela

Asaguan: Lourdes Fejeran Tudela Mendiola

Tatan: Alvin T. (Marleen S.) Mendiola, Janice M. (Joseph C.) Muna, Kahili San Nicolas, Jaclyn T. Mendiola, (John De Leon Guerrero), Adrian T. (Tanya P.) Mendiola, Janilyn T. Mendiola

Geulon: Matua, Louanne, Leisha, Kayline, Monique, Isabela, Ej, AJ, Zachery, Damien, Kaeddie

Che'lun: †Francisco M. Cabrera, Balbina M. (Ignacio) Perez, Fermina M. (Luis S.) Camacho, James M. Mendiola (Thomasa Palacios), Rosie M. (†Russell A.) Long, Florine M. (†John U.) Hofsneider, Martina M. (Thomas) Morgan, Rufino M. Mendiola (Bencilin John), Felipe M. (Kathy G.) Mendiola, Thomas M. (Marilyn L.) Mendiola, †David M. (†Victoria K.) Mendiola, Joseph M. (Carleen P.) Mendiola, Juanita M. Mendiola

Kiñadun: Santiago F. (Bertha C.) Tudela, Augustine F. (Connie) Tudela, Samuel F. (Annette S.) Tudela, Patricio F. (Carmen D.) Tudela, Dorothea T. (Benjamin) Seman, Joe F. (Frances C.) Tudela, Joaquin F. (Edith C.) Tudela, Rosalina T. (Joseph) Gabutin, Thomas F. (Nikonia DLG.) Tudela, Elaine F. Tudela (Paul Sasamoto).

Ha didingo lokkue' siha nos kuantos na man tihaña, man tihuña, subrinuña yan subrinañasiha

I lisayuña matutucha kada puengi gi alas 7:00, guatu gi gima' niha Dandan, Saipan. Para hu malaknos I tatataoña gi Inero Dia Dos, 2009 ya para hu ma kon' guatu gigima' yu'us San Vicente gi oran alas 8: 00 gi ega'an. Para hu tinatiyi nai I misaña gialas 11:00 gi ega'an dispues I interuña guatu gi seminteyon Chalan Kanoa.

'Tis Oscar season: Nomination ballots in the mail

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—The holidays may be winding down, but for Oscar fans, the season of celebration has just begun.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences mailed 5,810 official Oscar nominations ballots to voting members Friday, and perhaps no one was more excited—or more daunted—to cast votes than its 105 newest members.

"It's like 'Wayne's World.' I'm not worthy," said Doug Cooper, 35, who just joined the short films and feature animation branch. "Basically, it's fear. You have to make a decision."

Cinematographer Jonathan Brown said he and his industry pals have been doing their own Oscar polling for years—but this time, his vote really counts.

"The idea that now it matters is so cool," he said. "We can, in a small way, have an influence in people get-

ting recognized."

New academy inductees were recently toasted at a private reception in Beverly Hills, where they mingled with fellow members and reflected on what it means to belong to Hollywood's most exclusive club.

Producer Arman Bernstein said he's been preparing to cast Oscar votes since he was a child.

"My mom would get dressed up on Oscar night and make a special dinner," he said. "The next day, we didn't have to go to school. It was like a Jewish holiday."

Academy President Sid Ganis welcomed the group and reminded them of their power as Oscar voters.

"Conscientiously wield that power," he said. "Fill out ballots as thoughtfully as you can. This is your area of expertise."

Each of the academy's 15 branches is responsible for nominating those in their field—so actors nominate actors and sound engineers nominate sound engineers—based on the eligible films released that year. (There were 281 in 2008.) Oscar's final winners are determined by the entire voting membership, regardless of what branch they claim.

"Don't vote in any category in which (a) you haven't seen all the nominated achievements, or (b) you don't feel qualified to make a sophisticated critical judgment," Ganis said. "Don't vote if you haven't got all the information. It's the honorable thing to do."

Membership in the academy is by invitation based on professional accomplishment. Nominations will be announced Jan. 22 and Oscars will be presented Feb. 22.

Academy members typically spend

hours and hours watching the nominated films on DVD or in theaters before casting their final votes.

Helena Packer, a new member in the visual effects branch, said anxiety about the voting process began when she joined the academy.

"When a movie grabs you, you're not thinking in critical terms," she said. "This will require repeated viewing."

But Jim Houston, a new member at large, said that as a filmmaker, he feels qualified to weigh in on others' work.

"Once you start making movies, you have an internal critic going at all times," said the 49-year-old, adding that he's interested in the academy's science and technology council as he is in casting Oscar votes.

While voting on the Oscars is one of the most coveted responsibilities of academy members, it's hardly their

only opportunity to wield influence in the world of film. The organization maintains expansive movie and screenplay archives, operates a film-studies library, and hosts exhibits, screenings and special programs throughout the year—and academy members are key figures in all of it.

"The coolest thing is getting access to members, collections and events," said Brown, who just joined the cinematographers branch.

Members can volunteer to serve as readers for the academy's annual Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting competition or help spread the word about their craft through its media-literacy program at local schools.

Regardless of how they plan to get involved, their work begins in earnest as soon as those nomination ballots land in their mailboxes.

Writer recalls truth, fiction of 'Usual Suspects'

NEW YORK (AP)—The story line on "Valkyrie" has focused on the "Tom Cruise-as-Nazi" angle, but it's also a notable regrouping of the two minds behind one of the most beloved movies of the last 15 years.

On "Valkyrie," the writer and director of "The Usual Suspects" reunite for their most substantial project together since their 1995 film. Back then, director Bryan Singer and writer Christopher McQuarrie crafted a movie that today ranks as the 21st most popular film of all time, according to rankings on Imdb.com.

The jaw-dropping ending of "The Usual Suspects" is firmly lodged in movie lore, but on Singer and McQuarrie's recent collaboration, the ending couldn't be more predictable. Tom Cruise plays would-be Hitler assassin Col. Claus von Stauffenberg in "Valkyrie," and, obviously, all plots to kill Hitler failed.

McQuarrie, who co-wrote the script with Nathan Alexander, believes the known ending was the "single biggest asset" to "Valkyrie" because it creates a tragic, foreboding suspense.

"The Usual Suspects" was similarly written so it could entertain those who had already seen the ending, he said.

"It's not a movie with a twist that hangs on the twist," said McQuarrie in a recent interview. "We were very careful to engineer that movie for a second viewing."

In 2006, the Writers Guild voted "The Usual Suspects" the No. 35 greatest screenplay. McQuarrie, 40, went on to write and direct 2000's "The Way of the Gun," while Singer has helmed a number of blockbusters, including "X-Men," "X2" and "Superman Returns."

But many continue to wonder just how much of "The Usual Suspects"—how much of Verbal Kint's (Kevin Spacey) story—is true. (True, that is,

within the movie's plot.)

McQuarrie says only after finishing the film and preparing to do press interviews about it did he and Singer realize they both had completely different conceptions about the plot.

"I pulled Bryan aside the night before press began and I said, 'We need to get our stories straight because people are starting to ask what happened and what didn't,'" recalls McQuarrie. "And we got into the biggest argument we've ever had in our lives."

He continues: "One of us believed that the story was all lies, peppered with little bits of the truth. And the other one believed it was all true, peppered with tiny, little lies. ... We each thought we were making a movie that was completely different from what the other one thought."

So who believed what?

With a broad grin, McQuarrie responds: "I'll never tell."



Undated film still of the movie 'Valkyrie', released by Fox.

Harold Pinter: A master of the sound of silence

NEW YORK (AP)—No one made the sound of silence more ominously theatrical than Harold Pinter.

The influential British playwright, who died Christmas Eve after a long battle with cancer, created unforgettable moments of quiet, often filled with terror, outrage or the blackest of humor.

The "Pinter pause," as those silences were known, could send a shiver through an audience, jolting it into an unease that permeated many of his best plays, particularly such classics as "The Caretaker" and "The Homecoming."

"Pinter-esque" became an adjective bandied about in all the best drama schools and playwriting classes.

Yet Pinter knew how to make words count. As he grew older, his plays became leaner, more succinct in their language and frequently ferociously political.

There was an economy to his writing, a paring away that suggested an affinity with another Nobel Prize-winning playwright, Samuel Beckett, who often examined the human condition in the most terse and terrifying way possible.

It took a while for theatergoers, especially American audiences, to get used to Pinter. He made his Broadway debut in 1961 with "The Caretaker," which starred Alan Bates, Robert Shaw and Donald Pleasence.

The play, a bleak treatise on identity and possessiveness set in a squalid London attic, puzzled theatergoers who were unnerved by its menace and bewildered by its seemingly inconclusive tale of cat-and-mouse games.

No such problem greeted "The Homecoming," usually considered Pinter's masterwork. A best-play Tony winner in 1967, it has had several New York revivals since then, including a critically acclaimed Broadway production last year.

This distinctly atypical family drama of a tyrannical father, his dysfunctional sons and an obliging, sexually provocative daughter-in-law has become a contemporary masterwork.

In Pinter, linguistic clarity is all. From such early works as "The Room" and "The Birthday Party" right up through more recent efforts such as "Moonlight" and "Ashes to Ashes," his precision of language is imperative even if an exact meaning can't always be discerned. It's that



In this Oct. 2, 1973 file photo, British playwright and actor Harold Pinter is seen during an interview in New York.

ambiguity which has posed a special challenge to actors, a challenge readily accepted by many on both sides of the Atlantic. Pinter's plays have provided memorable stage performances by a diverse parade of mesmerizing actors such as John Gielgud, Jason Robards, Ian McShane, Christopher Plummer, Eve Best, Ralph Richardson, Raul Esparza and Vivien Merchant, among others.

Pinter's best writing wasn't limited to theater. He wrote several elegant screenplays, particularly "The Go-Between" (1970), the tale of an illicit romance which starred Julie Christie and Alan Bates, and "The French Lieutenant's Woman," starring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons (1981).

In recent years, he found a renewed vigor and moral passion as politics bubbled to the surface of many of his later plays. A vociferous critic of the American and British involvement in Iraq, he often wrote of political violence, particularly in such works as "One for the Road."

In 2005, when Pinter won the Nobel Prize, he was too frail to travel to Sweden to accept the award. But in a recorded lecture presented at the Swedish Academy, he said: "The invasion of Iraq was a bandit act, an act of blatant state terrorism, demonstrating absolute contempt for the concept of international law." He castigated both British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush.

'Marley' stirs it up with record \$14.75 mil Xmas

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Twentieth Century Fox says "Marley & Me" has set a Christmas Day record with \$14.75 million at the box office.

That breaks the previous mark of \$10.2 million, set by "Ali" in 2001, according to Media By Numbers LLC.

And "Marley & Me" may not be alone: "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" and "Bedtime Stories" were also expected to move past the previous Christmas Day mark, according to some studio estimates.

Even "Valkyrie" had a strong Yuletide opening with more than \$8 million, those numbers show.

DJ AM files lawsuit in South Carolina plane crash

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A celebrity disc jockey who survived a fiery Learjet crash in South Carolina has sued several companies and the estates of the plane's pilots.

Adam Goldstein, known as DJ AM, filed his complaint for negligence and breach of contract Tuesday in Los Angeles Superior Court. Goldstein and punk rocker Travis Barker, who has also sued the companies, were the sole survivors of the Sept. 19 crash.

Barker sued on behalf of the family of his bodyguard, Charles Still, and the widow of Barker's assistant, Chris Baker, filed her own lawsuit earlier this month.

Goldstein and Barker were seriously burned escaping the plane. The pair plan to perform together again for the first time since the crash at an event in Los Angeles on New Year's Eve. They perform under the name TRVSDJAM.

Goldstein's lawsuit seeks a jury trial, but doesn't specify

how much money he hopes to receive for loss of earnings, medical expenses, pain and suffering and other damages.

He is also suing the estates of the plane's pilots, Sarah Lemmon, and James Bland. A phone number for Lemmon's mother couldn't be located, and Bland's wife declined to comment Wednesday.

The lawsuit claims the plane's owners and operators acted in a careless and negligent manner and that Goldstein has been seriously harmed—physically and financially—by the crash.

Federal investigators have not yet determined the cause of the crash.

Aviation authorities have said cockpit recordings indicated the jet's crew thought a tire had blown during takeoff. National Transportation Safety Board officials have said pieces of tire were recovered about 2,800 feet from where the plane started its takeoff down the 8,600-foot runway in Columbia, S.C.

Wasserman, 'Man of La Mancha' writer, dies at 94

PHOENIX (AP)—Dale Wasserman, author of the book for the Tony-winning musical "Man of La Mancha," as well as the stage adaptation of Ken Kesey's novel "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," has died. He was 94.

Wasserman died Dec. 21 of congestive heart failure at his home in the Phoenix suburb of Paradise Valley, his wife, Martha, said Saturday.

"Man of La Mancha," the tale of the intrepid, ever idealistic Don Quixote, was one of Broadway's biggest hits in the 1960s. The show, which starred Richard Kiley and Joan Diener, opened in 1965 and won the Tony for best musical. It ran for more than 2,300 performances.

Its best known song, "The Impossible Dream," written by composer Mitch Leigh and lyricist Joe Darion, became a popular hit, particularly in a version by Jack Jones. The show has had several Broadway revivals since the '60s, with the latest in 2002 starring Brian Stokes Mitchell and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio.



AP
In this image released by 20th Century Fox, Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston are shown in a scene from, "Marley and Me."

Celebrities share adoption stories for TV special

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jamie Foxx, Faith Hill and Keyshia Cole hope to help children find homes for the holidays.

Speaking backstage last month after filming their appearances for the CBS special "A Home for the Holidays," Foxx, Hill and Cole shared how they coped with being adopted and why they performed for the show, which offers a mix of musical entertainment and information about child adoption.

"I was lucky," said the Oscar-winning Foxx ("Ray"). "I was adopted at 7 months, but the lady who adopted me also adopted my mother, so I had a relationship with my biological parents, also." Country superstar Hill was also adopted as an infant, but after hitting adolescence had to fight off the adoption stigma. "When kids would call one another names, they'd say, 'You act like you're adopted.' And I'd always get 'em good, because I'd say, 'Well, I am adopted. So what do you think about that?'" she said.

The special, which airs Tuesday, was the brainchild of Dave Thomas, the Wendy's restaurant founder. Thomas, who was adopted, created the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption in 1992.

Soul diva Keyshia Cole said, "My personal story was my mother was on drugs all my life and she didn't get a little bit better until I became 'Keyshia Cole the Celebrity.' Maybe it



AP
This Nov. 16, 2008 file photo shows singer Keyshia Cole posing for photographs after taping the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's '10th Annual A Home for the Holidays,' which airs Tuesday Dec. 23, 2008.

was a good way for her to see herself—that your daughter has become so much and she's become so big."

The show will feature musical performances by Hill's husband Tim McGraw, as well as Kristin Chenoweth, Gavin Rossdale and Melissa Etheridge.

Etheridge, a mother of four, adopted two children with former partner, director Julie Cypher. It wasn't lost on Etheridge that her involvement in the special came just days after Arkansas voters approved a law banning gays from adopting children.

"Our homes are good homes," Etheridge said, who also has twins with current partner Tammy Lynn Michaels.

Mother is wary of neighbor boy with loud potty mouth

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: Two years ago, a couple built a home on the lot next to ours. From the time they moved in, we have been concerned about their 11-year-old son's anti-social behavior. It began with him trying to coax our dog into his yard when we were trying to call her in. Then he started coming into our yard, playing roughly with our three small children and using vulgar language around our 8-year-old daughter.

He is no longer allowed in our yard and has been kicked out of three other homes in the neighborhood. The most recent incident occurred a few days ago, when he yelled a profanity at our daughter. I called his mother, and she told me her son would "never behave that way!"

Abby, this boy is creepy. I don't trust him. He stands in his yard staring at us whenever we are outside. I'm worried his behavior will get worse. Other neighbors have seen him abuse his dog and other animals. His parents never watch him. What do we do? I'm worried about my children's safety.

AFARID IN WISCONSIN

DEAR AFARID: You have described a child who is emotionally disturbed and parents who are in denial. Because the neighbors have seen him abuse animals, a report should be made to the police and the department of animal welfare in your community. This boy has no empathy for others and needs professional help. Until he gets it, you are wise to be concerned about your children. Keep a watchful eye.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I lost my father a few months ago after his long battle with cancer. We were very close, and I miss him terribly.

My ex-husband and I are not on good terms, despite the fact that we have children together. He asked our kids—not me—if it was OK if he attended the funeral. I told them I didn't want him there. I just wanted to grieve in peace.

A few minutes after Dad's funeral service began, my ex walked in the back door. My sister knew he had been asked not to attend, so she asked him to please leave.

I am so disgusted. My former in-laws, whom I didn't get along with either, sent flowers. I would have preferred they keep their flowers—but at least they didn't show up.

My children are now mad at me because their father was asked to leave. I just wanted to be left alone. I don't understand why this was so hard for everyone to understand. It was my father, not his, and I just wanted to grieve in peace.

MOURNING FOR MY DAD IN MISSOURI

DEAR MOURNING: Please accept my condolences for the loss of your father. Your children may have wanted their father there because they were grieving the loss of their grandfather.

According to Emily Post: "If there was ill feeling between the ex-spouse and the deceased," and I assume your father felt about your ex as you do, "the ex should not attend the funeral; instead, he (or she) sends flowers and a sympathy note." However, your wishes should not have been ignored.

The new year has begun, and the less baggage you carry into it, the better off you will be. Please try to forgive your ex for his insensitivity and get on with your life. If you can manage that, it will be less painful for you and your children. If you can't, then counseling may help you to let go of some of your anger, and I recommend it.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

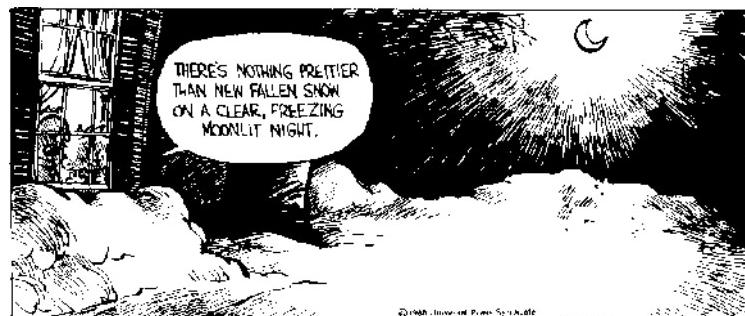
To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)



Dear Abby

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson



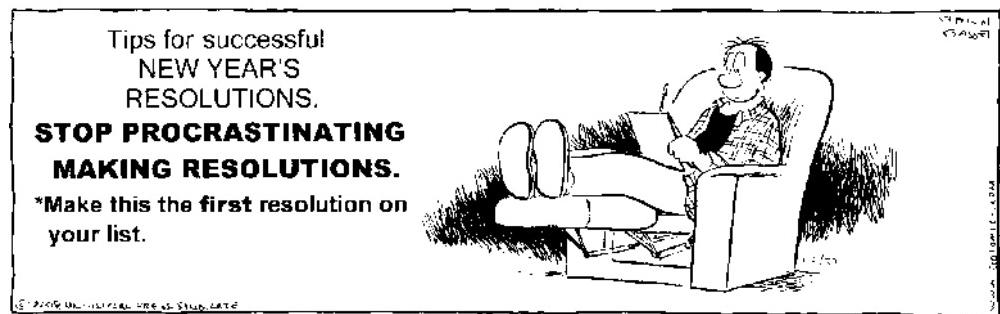
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The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

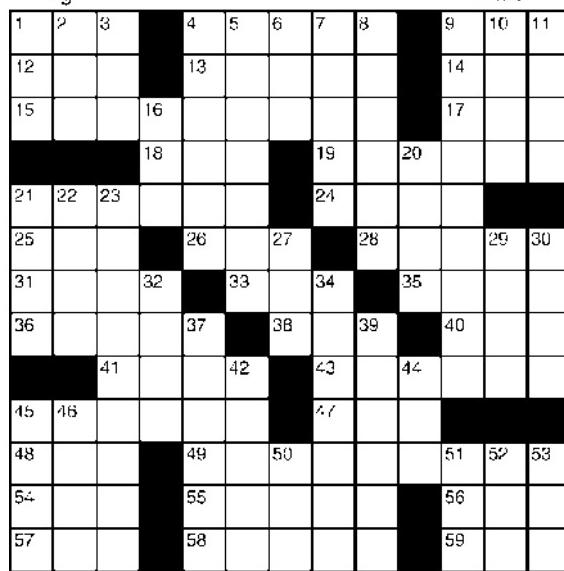


CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		43	Cantankerous	2	Kimono closer	22	From the beginning	
1	Run for exercise	45	Leather-neck	3	Lady friend	23	Hit of a sort	
4	San Diego ballplayer	47	Illuminated	4	Marijuana	27	Spot on a card	
9	Ormea predecker	48	"The Greatest"	5	Touchy situation?	29	Den	
12	Lawyers' org.	49	Emphasize,	6	"SNI" an-	30	Sans siblings	
13	WW II sub		as a point	7	Speed demon?	32	Actress Garr	
14	Downs' opposites	54	Gun the engine	8	Tribal, perhaps	34	Developed	
15	Dairy-and-booze mix	55	Whom Bugs bugs	9	End of a joke	37	Cater to others' wants	
17	— de plume	56	Uncooked	10	Locate	39	Colonial newscasters	
18	Suitable	57	Witness	11	Doctrines	42	TV's "Uncle Miltie"	
19	Makes into law	58	Peruses	16	Pern who played Kumar	44	To the degree	
21	Billfold	59	Bunyan's tool	20	Scrood perfectly	45	Fourth planet	
24	Affluent					46	Oul of the storm	
25	Blackbird	1	Predicament:	21	Comical folks	50	"— I little Teavot"	
26	Spigot					51	Man-mouse link	
28	Violin's kin					52	"The Producers" role	
31	Bloke					53	Ram's mate	
33	Untruth							
35	Naturalist Fossey							
36	Use a broom							
38	Insulating material, for short							
40	Zero							
41	Unexciting							

Saturday's answer 12-29



For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 9¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ or y.) A King Features service, NYC.

STUMPED?

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jude Law, 36; Bryan "Dexter" Holland, 43; Ted Danson, 61; Marianne Faithfull, 62

Happy Birthday: Opportunities are heading your way so it will not be the time to procrastinate but rather to move swiftly to beat the competition. You will have added drive and can mastermind your way in and out of any situation. You should be able to stabilize both your personal and financial position. Your numbers are 1, 8, 10, 22, 31, 39, 46

ARIES (March 21-April 19): If something doesn't appear to be right, don't go there. Protect yourself, your family and your future. Stick close to home and out of trouble. It's a time to reflect, not make moves. **★★★**

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Get out with friends, colleagues or fellow students and make today an event to remember. Past partnerships will come to mind as you move forward. What you have learned will guide you to a better future. **★★**

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You need to negotiate your position and convincingly talk about your intentions. A chance of a lifetime is within reach if you start the ball rolling now and make everyone aware of what you want. **★★★★**

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let bad memories ruin your day or restart a feud you should have let go of long ago. Be forward-thinking and strive for advancement, positive change and enjoying your friends and family. Don't get all worked up over nothing. **★★**

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take action while no one expects you to. You have more control over your future than you are aware and, if you can masterfully talk your way into getting what you want, you will prosper. Start being proactive. **★★★★**

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You have to get organized personally, financially and professionally. Make some decisions that will help you get your footing in the new year. Someone you found to be a visionary in the past will help you. **★★**

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You

have had an interesting year with some gains and some unfortunate losses. It's **★★★★**

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Make a concerted effort to get together with the people who have touched you personally this year. The reflection you see will enlighten you as to how you can be more spectacular in the future, using the wisdom you have gained in the past. **★★★★**

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Take it easy, don't let things get to you and look out for the ones you love. Don't be fooled by a fast-talker or taken in by meaningless words. Don't give in or give up when there is so much good ahead of you. **★★★★**

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPRIGHT 2007
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

time to gather all the facts and figures and move in the direction you feel will help you prosper the most in the new year. **★★★★**

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Emotional issues should be dealt with before the end of the year. Be honest with yourself and others. It will prompt you to make a couple of choices that will free you from any worries in the future. **★★★★**

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Keep things out in the open or you may find yourself out of the loop. Be bold and blunt about what you want and see every detail through to the end. Change may cause some uncertainty but trust in someone from your past to give you the answers. **★★★★**

Birthday Baby: You are demanding, hardworking and a straight-shooter. You are a respected friend, companion and colleague.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

2	1	3	5	8	4
5			7		3
3			8		5
6	2				9
3		6	9	2	7
1			3		2
7		1			3
6		3		4	
9	3	8	6	5	7

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	2	1	8	7	5	4	9	6
4	9	5	2	1	6	7	3	8
8	6	7	4	3	9	2	5	1
2	5	8	6	4	1	3	7	9
1	3	9	5	2	7	8	6	4
7	4	6	9	8	3	1	2	5
9	1	2	7	6	4	5	8	3
6	7	4	3	5	8	9	1	2
5	8	3	1	9	2	6	4	7

Difficulty Level ★

12/29

BY DAVID OUELLET

WONDERWORD

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEM. LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

JOSH BROLIN

C	N	E	E	S	G	C	I	P	R	M	T	
H	O	S	D	O	C	O	A	S	T	L	I	N
A	T	U	E	O	S	C	A	R	D	E	R	L
R	E	O	N	T	D	I	A	N	E	V	M	I
M	L	H	S	I	A	R	E	R	A	I	M	N
J												

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JVA# 09-010

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NMI Retirement Fund
PO Box 501247
Saipan, MP 96950
E-mail: administrator01@nmiretirement.com

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• 5-Liner	\$35
• 3-Liner with picture	\$45
• 5-Liner with picture	\$55

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:

- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION
Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Randy Johnson signs one-year deal with Giants



S A N
FRANCIS-
CO (AP)—

With two recent back surgeries behind him, Randy Johnson is refreshed and focused on being a baseball player again this winter—rather than a pitcher limited to rigorous rehabilitation work, his case the past two offseas.

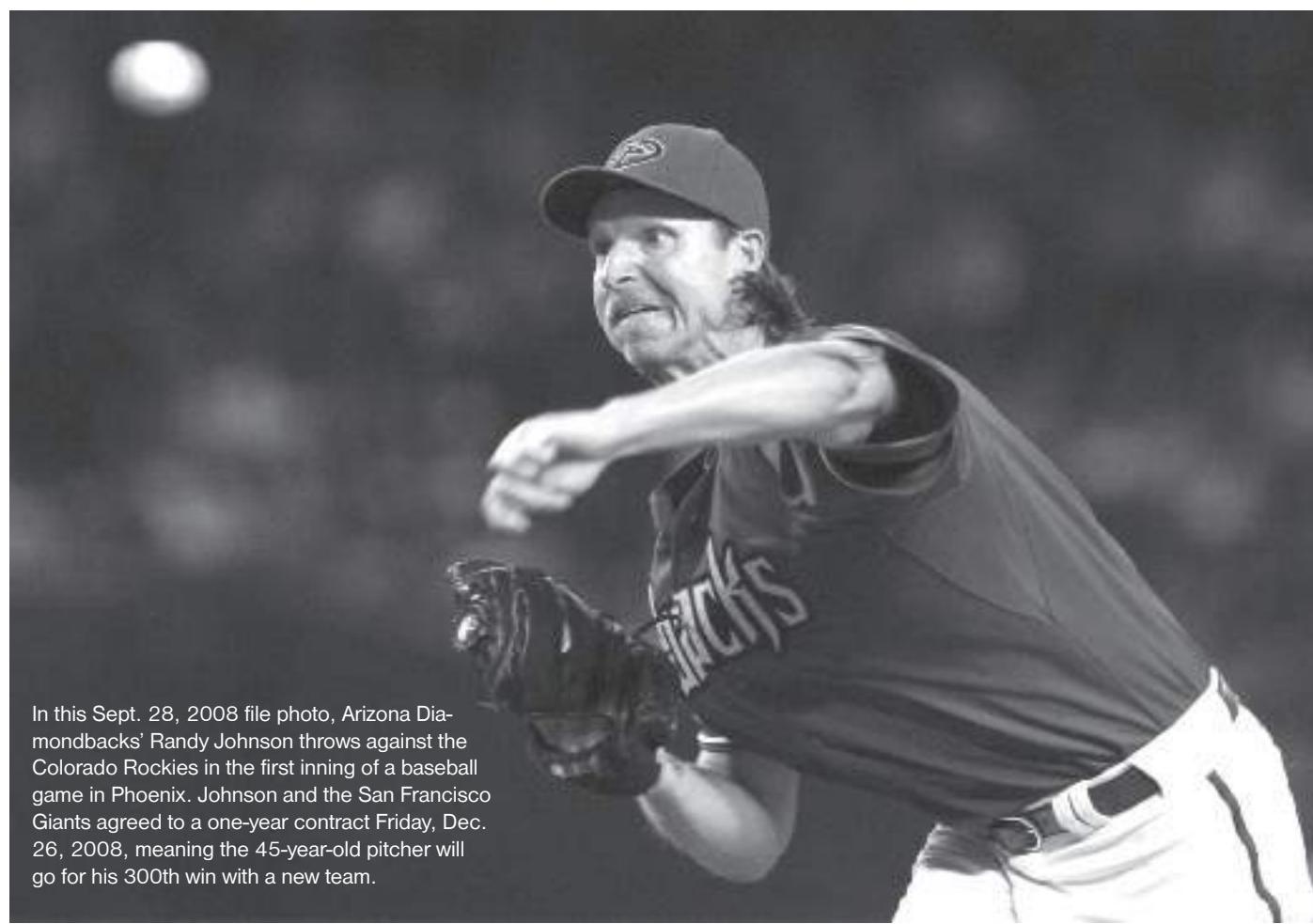
The 45-year-old Big Unit has been playing catch for three weeks already—and, now, is busy preparing to join his new San Francisco Giants teammates come the start of spring training in February.

"I'm well ahead of schedule than I was the last two offseas," Johnson said Saturday during a conference call, noting he plans to be on the 2009 opening day roster. "It will be really nice to be in that position this year.... To some degree I have silenced the critics and shown that I'm healthy."

The Giants are counting on that.

Johnson joins fellow Cy Young winners Tim Lincecum (2008) and Barry Zito (2002) in an intriguing rotation that also features promising right-hander Matt Cain and lefty Jonathan Sanchez. San Francisco becomes the first team with three Cy Young recipients since the 2002 Atlanta Braves with Tom Glavine, Greg Maddux and John Smoltz.

Giants general manager Brian



In this Sept. 28, 2008 file photo, Arizona Diamondbacks' Randy Johnson throws against the Colorado Rockies in the first inning of a baseball game in Phoenix. Johnson and the San Francisco Giants agreed to a one-year contract Friday, Dec. 26, 2008, meaning the 45-year-old pitcher will go for his 300th win with a new team.

Sabean believes his club could become a contender again in the NL West with the addition of Johnson. San Francisco expressed an interest in him from the start of free agency and had several productive conversations with his representatives to make it happen.

Johnson wanted to stay on the West Coast, and in the NL

West if possible, to start his 22nd major league season. The Giants will be his sixth big league team.

"During this process, there was a great deal of interest in me, and that leads me to believe there are some people who still believe in me," Johnson said. "San Francisco was at the top of my list. I pitched against them

three or four times last year and saw the potential they have."

Still, the Giants haven't reached the playoffs since 2003 and Sabean will continue looking to upgrade his offense. The tough part about that is there are more outfielders available than infielders, and the Giants need to fill out their infield.

Sabean figures that boosting

the pitching staff with someone like Johnson could help compensate for a less-productive offense.

"It just sends a message if we're short-stacked in one area we're going to do everything we can to win games," Sabean said. "Simply put, we're proud to have Randy in our organization. He's here for one reason

and that's to help us make a run at this division. He's still one of the most intimidating pitchers in baseball."

Johnson, who spent the past two seasons with the Arizona Diamondbacks, was born in Walnut Creek, Calif., about 30 minutes from the Giants' waterfront ballpark. He grew up in nearby Livermore.

San Francisco offered several things on Johnson's wish list: spring training in the Phoenix area, and a chance to stay on the West Coast and in the NL West so he can pitch near his current home in Arizona.

"I'm excited to come back to where I started my baseball career," said Johnson, who still has a brother and a sister in the area. "As a visiting player with the Diamondbacks, a couple of the reporters would ask me, 'Toward the end of your career, do you see yourself playing in the Bay Area?' It's always nice to come back and play there."

Johnson, who can earn an additional \$5 million in performance bonuses, has 295 victories after going 11-10 with a 3.91 ERA in 30 starts last season.

He has 4,789 strikeouts, second on the career list to Nolan Ryan (5,714). The 6-foot-10 lefty made \$16 million last season, when he struck out 173 and walked 44 after beginning the season on the disabled list. He made his 2008 debut in San Francisco on April 14.

with 3:28 left, and Anthony Miller scored the go-ahead touchdown on his first career catch moments later in California's 24-17 victory in the Emerald Bowl on Saturday night.

Jahvid Best rushed for a bowl-record 186 yards and two touchdowns, yet the Golden Bears (9-4) still needed a big defensive play and an unlikely hero to hold off the Hurricanes (7-6) in front of a Bay Area crowd teeming with screaming Cal fans.

Harris played well in the freshman's second career start, going 25-of-41 for 194 yards and two TDs while subbing for the suspended Robert Marve. Harris had won 31 straight starts dating back to his high school career in South Florida, but his fumble cost the Hurricanes in their first bowl game under coach Randy Shannon.

Nate Longshore shook off a dismal 10-for-21 performance in his final college game with that sharp scoring pass to Miller for Cal. The Golden Bears won for the fifth time in a school-record six consecutive bowl appearances under coach Jeff Tedford.

Laron Byrd and Thearon Collier caught Harris' scoring passes for Miami, which tied it on Matt Bosher's 22-yard field goal with 9:13 to play

West Virginia wins Meineke Bowl



C H A R -
L O T T E ,

N.C. (AP)—Dur-

ing four record-breaking seasons at West Virginia, Pat White made comeback victories and bowl wins routine.

His grand finale, though, was unique. The most prolific running quarterback in college football history had the best passing game of his career, cementing his status as one of the best players in school history and perhaps showing he can take his game to the NFL, too.

White threw for 332 yards in his final college game, including the game-winning 20-yard touchdown pass to Alric Arnett midway through the fourth quarter in West Virginia's 31-30 victory over North Carolina on Saturday in the Meineke Bowl.

The senior was voted MVP of a bowl for the third straight year and finished 4-0 in post-season games, helping West Virginia (9-4) end a disappointing season on a positive note.

"I'm sitting by the greatest winner in college football today," West Virginia coach Bill Stewart said of White. "He's the greatest to ever wear the old gold and blue. It's a fitting tribute that this man's the MVP."

It took a great performance to beat out Hakeem Nicks, who

caught eight passes for 217 yards and three touchdowns for the Tar Heels (8-5). But T.J. Yates otherwise strong game was marred when he was intercepted by Pat Lazear with under 2 minutes left, ending coach Butch Davis' hopes of a bowl win to complete his turnaround season at North Carolina.

"It's disappointing to lose this game, but I'm very proud of this football team and the strides we've made," said Davis, whose team was 4-8 last year and playing in their first bowl since 2004.

As Davis spoke, Stewart was leading the crowd in cheers in a sweet ending to a tumultuous season for the much-maligned replacement for Rich Rodriguez.

Entering the season as prohibitive favorites to win the Big East, the Mountaineers started 1-2. They recovered to win five straight, only to go 2-2 over their final four games to end their BCS bowl hopes.

White made sure they went out a winner.

"Half those people out there in the old gold and blue, they all love him," Stewart said, looking at White. "But half of them would like to hang me.... But I'm not mad. They have such a passion in West

Virginia. All they want us to do is be the best."

North Carolina routinely put eight men on the line of scrimmage to stop the NCAA's all-time leading rushing quarterback. White was held to 55 yards rushing, finishing with 4,480 in his career.

Florida State 42, Wisconsin 13

In Orlando, Florida, Derek Nicholson and Dekoda Watson returned fumbles for touchdowns, Christian Ponder threw two TD passes and Florida State (9-4) finished with more than eight wins for the first time since 2004.

Nicholson had two fumble recoveries, including one he returned 75 yards for a first-quarter touchdown. Punter Graham Gano averaged 48.2 yards on five and had three downed inside the Badgers 5 to earn game MVP.

P.J. Hill ran for 140 yards on 15 carries for the Badgers (7-6), but quarterback Dustin Sherer completed only four of nine for 55 yards through the first three quarters. His fumble early in the fourth quarter was returned 51 yards for a score by Watson to put FSU up 35-6.

Ponder completed 18 of 31 passes for 199 yards.



West Virginia's Bradley Starks (14) and Tyler Urban (89) celebrate after Starks' touchdown catch during the first half against North Carolina in the Meineke Car Care Bowl NCAA college football game in Charlotte, N.C., Saturday, Dec. 27, 2008.

Florida State, playing in its NCAA-leading 27th-straight bowl game, improved coach Bobby Bowden's career record to 21-10-1.

California 24, Miami 17

In San Francisco, Zack Follett forced a fumble by Jacory Harris deep in Miami territory

Prince, Iverson lift Pistons past Bucks



MILWAUKEE (AP)—Tayshaun Prince scored nine of his 19 points in the decisive third quarter and Allen Iverson added 18, lifting the Detroit Pistons to an 87-76 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday night.

The Pistons beat Milwaukee for the 10th time in 13 meetings since the 2005-06 season.

Rasheed Wallace had 16 points and 12 rebounds, and Rodney Stuckey added 16 points for Detroit, which has won three straight and six of eight. The Bucks' three-game winning streak was snapped.

Andrew Bogut had 17 points and 10 rebounds for Milwaukee, which shot 30 percent and mainly rested its starters for the final 15 minutes after the game was decided.

Michael Redd, the Bucks' leading scorer, had four points and missed nine of 11 shots, including his last five.

The Pistons missed their first five shots of the second half and Luke Ridnour's jumper gave Milwaukee its last lead, 48-46, with 10:35 left in the quarter.

Stuckey then tipped in his own missed layup to tie the score at 48, starting a 27-5 run in which Detroit made 11 of 15 shots to take a 73-53 lead on Prince's free throw with 19 seconds left in the period.

Prince had nine points, four rebounds, two assists and a steal in the third.

The Bucks missed 14 of 17 shots during one third-quarter stretch as Detroit took a commanding lead that it never relinquished.

Milwaukee was so out of sync that coach Scott Skiles went with a lineup of Malik Allen, Joe Alexander, Tyronn Lue, Dan Gadzuric and Ridnour with 3:40 left in the third quarter, leaving most of the starters on the bench the rest of the way. It didn't help as Detroit outscored the Bucks 10-4 to lead 75-55 after three quarters, and Milwaukee never got within single digits again.

Luc Richard Mbah a Moute had 12 points and eight rebounds, and Ramon Sessions added 12 points for Milwaukee.

The victory gave Detroit a pair of wins in two nights. The game was a breather compared with the 90-88 victory over Oklahoma City on Friday night when Iverson hit a running jumper with 0.3 seconds left.

Wallace and Iverson each scored 10 points in the first half as Detroit took a 46-44 lead into halftime.

Hawks 129, Bulls 117

In Atlanta, Joe Johnson scored a season-high 41 points, Josh Smith also set a season high with 24, and the Atlanta Hawks withstood Ben Gordon's 3-point barrage to beat the Chicago Bulls 129-117 on Saturday night.

Johnson finished one point shy of his career high. The Hawks, who normally prefer a lower-scoring pace, topped their previous season best by 10 points.

Gordon scored 33 points and was 6-of-8 behind the arc to pass Scottie Pippen and become the Bulls' career leader in 3-pointers. Rookie Derrick Rose added a career-high 27 points.

The Bulls matched their season



Detroit Pistons' Allen Iverson (1) shoots over Milwaukee Bucks' Luke Ridnour (13) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Dec. 27, 2008, in Milwaukee.

high for points and shot 54 percent from the field but still were not close at the end.

Wizards 104, Thunder 95

In Washington, Antawn Jamison scored 29 points, Andray Blatche had 19 points and tied his career high with 15 rebounds, and the Wizards beat the Thunder in a matchup of teams with the two worst records in the NBA.

The Wizards broke an eight-game losing streak, their longest since 2001, with just their fifth win against 23 losses. Oklahoma City fell to 3-28.

Kevin Durant led Oklahoma City with 25 points and 11 rebounds.

Nets 114, Bobcats 103, OT

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Vince Carter scored 28 points and the Nets pulled away in overtime to beat the Bobcats.

Devin Harris added 26 points, Jarvis Hayes 14 and Josh Boone 12 for the Nets, who lost to the Bobcats 95-87 in East Rutherford, N.J., just

24 hours earlier.

Gerald Wallace scored 32 points for the Bobcats, who rallied from an eight-point deficit in the fourth quarter to tie it at 96 and force overtime.

Magic 118, Timberwolves 94

In Minneapolis, Hedo Turkoglu scored 11 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, and the Magic slowly pulled away to beat the Timberwolves.

Rashard Lewis added 24 points, Jameer Nelson 20 and Dwight Howard 17 for the Magic, who won their seventh straight and 11th in 12 games—all against the Western Conference.

Rashad McCants scored 21 points for Minnesota, which ended a 13-game losing streak Friday in New York. Al Jefferson had 16 points and Ryan Gomes 14 for the Timberwolves, who have lost nine straight at home.

Rockets 120, Jazz 115

In Houston, Ron Artest scored 10 of

his 28 points in the second overtime and the Houston Rockets recovered from blowing a 16-point lead in the second half to beat the Utah Jazz 120-115 on Saturday night.

Yao Ming had 26 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Rockets, who led 59-43 early in the third quarter, then went 3-for-18 from the field in the fourth to fuel Utah's comeback.

Ronnie Brewer scored 23 and Deron Williams had 14 points and 11 assists for the Jazz, who played without their top three scorers and rebounders—Carlos Boozer, Mehmet Okur and Paul Millsap—for the second straight game.

The game was tied at 96 at the end of the regulation, and at 101 after the first overtime.

Halfway through NBA season, coaches are slammed and dunked

NEW YORK (AP)—Every year, at least a handful of NBA coaches wind up unemployed through some combination of bad play and bad luck. This season, there has to be another reason.

Inflated expectations? The recession? A revolt against the coaching profession? Not even halfway through the season, NBA coaches have as weak hold as ever on their jobs.

"I said to somebody, I think there's a coup out there," Houston coach Rick Adelman said.

Adelman was smiling, but this is no laughing matter for his profession. Six coaches were fired before Christmas, 20 percent of the league's total and the most at this point in a season, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Nine teams changed coaches in the 2004-05 season, a record that could be in jeopardy.

"I just wish I could be in the meeting with the owner when that GM who is firing them is guaranteeing, 'We're going to be better by making this change,' because I don't see it ever getting that much better," Denver coach George Karl said.

Oklahoma City got the pink slips rolling by dismissing P.J. Carlesimo after a 1-12 start, then posted the same record in Scott Brooks' first 13 games. Injury-plagued Washington (Eddie Jordan) and Sacramento (Reggie Theus) also made changes. So did Toronto (Sam Mitchell), Philadelphia (Maurice Cheeks) and Minnesota (Randy Wittman), teams that expected to be much better than they are.

Coaches always say they're hired expecting to be fired—but not this much, this soon.

"It's pretty consistent the way they're going about it. Once you start going in the other direction, there's no miracle trades," Adelman said. "The classic line I've seen a couple of times is, 'Everybody's accountable.' I've seen general managers say that, or personnel people. But everybody's still there but the coach."

"So not everybody is accountable. Even though that's a nice statement to say, I don't think that's the truth. When you're a coach in this league, you know that's something that can happen at any time."

Adelman notes that young coaches often get started with bad jobs. Theus, for example, saw Mike Bibby and Ron Artest traded during his one-plus season by a Kings team that is on the decline after Adelman had it near the top of the league earlier this decade.

Karl said some of the problem is the false hopes teams have after summer-time moves. The 76ers signed Elton Brand and the Raptors acquired Jer-

maine O'Neal, and both teams were widely picked to finish in the top half of the Eastern Conference. However, neither club gave its coach much time to get the new changes working—even though Philadelphia started slowly last season before Cheeks led a second-half surge into the playoffs.

"Most of those teams were expecting to be substantially better than they're performing," Karl said. But predictions by writers and team officials are often made before anyone sees how a team jells—or doesn't.

"Everybody thinks they're going to win a championship in the summer," Karl said.

Jerry Sloan has spent 21 seasons in Utah and enjoys unparalleled security in a league where, according to Elias, there have been 224 coaching changes. He believes the troubling economic times could play a role, with teams desperate to try anything to hold fans who might look elsewhere for entertainment.

The Sixers can't fill their building in a sports-crazed city. The Kings no longer sell out, not long after they enjoyed perhaps the NBA's best home-court advantage.

"You can blame it on anything that you want. That might have something to do with it," Sloan said. "People don't come to watch your games. I think that's happened a few times over the years where people are not there, they figure try somebody else and see if they come watch a game."

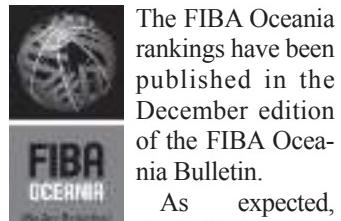
Professor Andrew Zimbalist, a sports economist at Smith College, said it's hard to argue a direct financial link because owners have to take on more salary when they hire a new coach. But he did allow for an indirect connection if an owner of a struggling team suddenly becomes antsy because of hits elsewhere to his portfolio.

"It's kind of, 'I'm desperate, I'm looking for anything I can find to turn the momentum around and so I'm going to find another coach,'" Zimbalist told The Associated Press. "But that's more of a psychological explanation. It's more saying the owner is anxious, worried, trigger happy, all of those things, rather than some rational explanation that says, 'I can't afford this coach and then I'm going to hire a new one,' because that only ends up costing him more money."

"So maybe there's a desperation explanation. It's psychological. I've got to find something to keep people in the seats and since I can't fire the players, I'm going to fire my coach. And if somehow they think that's going to make people show up, it could play out that way, but it seems like it's kind of a long shot."

FIBA Oceania caging rankings released

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



The FIBA Oceania rankings have been published in the December edition of the FIBA Oceania Bulletin.

As expected, Australia is ranked No. 1 in both the men's and women's divisions.

Australia earned 862 ranking points in the men's division to finish ahead of New Zealand (716.25 points). Completing the Top 10 are Guam (245), New Caledonia (212.5), Fiji (203), Samoa (123), American Samoa (93), Tahiti (91.5), the Marshall Islands (42), and Palau.

The CNMI is ranked No. 17 getting 13.5 points.

Also on the list are Papua New Guinea (36.5), Vanuatu (28.5), the Cook Islands (27.75), the Federated States of Micronesia (27.5), Nauru (22.5), Kiribati (12), and Tonga (11).

The CNMI gained a higher ranking in the women's division with its female players placing No. 11 after getting 27.25 points.

Australia has 1654 to pace New Zealand (631.75), Fiji (332), Tahiti 9201.25), New Caledonia (187.25), Samoa

(127.5), American Samoa (122.25), PNG (86), Palau (60.5), Guam (48.75), Nauru (22), FSM (20), the Marshall Islands (20), Vanuatu (19), the Solomon Islands (15.75), the Cook Islands (15.5), and Tonga (1.75).

Overall, the Top 5 is composed of Australia (2525), New Zealand 91348), Fiji (535.5), New Caledonia (322.5), and Guam (293.75), while the CNMI is ranked 13th with its total points of 49.75.

The ranking system is similar to the one used by FIBA to rank national teams in worldwide basis. Basketball Association of Northern Mariana Islands secretary general and FIBA Oceania Board member Michael A. White was tasked to produce the rankings.

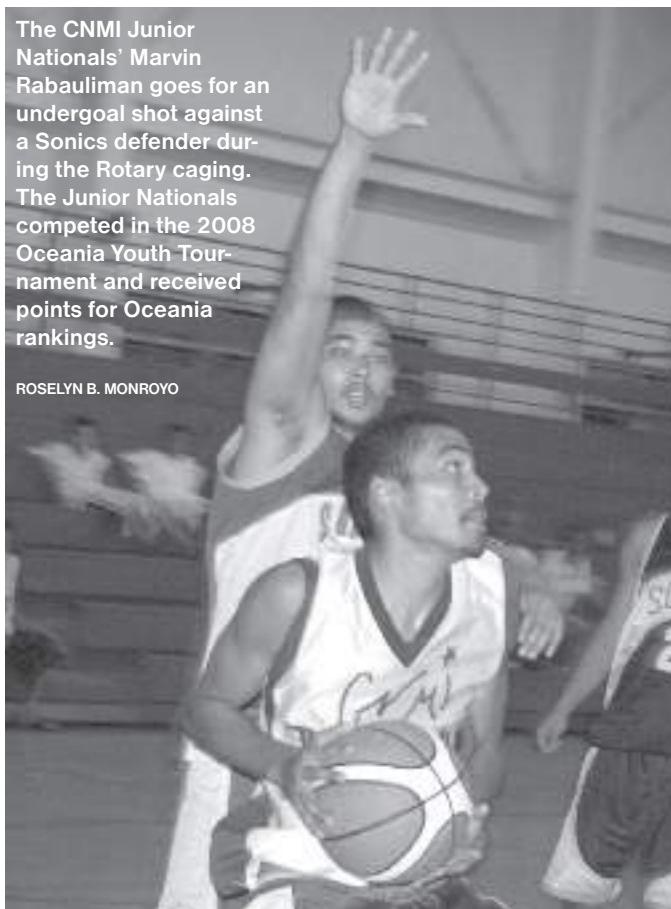
White in an email to Saipan Tribune sent a copy of the criteria used in the rankings.

The rankings are calculated within the scope of an eight-year cycle. For an event held every four years, such as the Olympics and Pacific Games, the last two competitions are taken into account. For biennial events, the last four are considered. For annual meets, the last eight are included on the list.

Each event is assigned a weight with the FIBA World Champion-

The CNMI Junior Nationals' Marvin Rabauliman goes for an undergoal shot against a Sonics defender during the Rotary caging. The Junior Nationals competed in the 2008 Oceania Youth Tournament and received points for Oceania rankings.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO



ships and Olympics getting the most points with five each. For each event, points are assigned based upon a team's placing.

A gold medal finish gives a team 50 points, 40 for silver, 30 for bronze, 15 for fourth, 12 for fifth, 10 for sixth, nine for sev-

enth, nine for eighth, seven for ninth, six for 10th, five for 11th, four for 12th, third for 13th, and two for 14th, and one for 15th and 16th.

The points earned by a team in an event are multiplied by the weight assigned to that event.

Mister and Cole Chambers were the kid runners in the group and held their own against the island's seasoned runners.

'Road Runner Bunny' wins solo race

Jack "The Road Runner Bunny" Kabiriel shattered the 2007 winning time of Villafria (1:48.50) en route to prevailing in the solo race division.

Kabiriel clocked in at 1:47:35

to finish ahead of Keum Bae Ji (1:58:17). Other finishers in the men's solo were Lewie Tenorio (2:03:24), Fred Camacho (2:03:25), Yoshi Suzuki (2:04:38), and Stephen Springer (2:23:05).

Noriko Jim competed in her first long distance race in about a year and was the first female finisher timing in at 1:56:03. Monica Yamaguchi and Tamia Noshikido clocked in at 1:58:17, and 2:10:41, respectively.

recovered from his early loss and marched through the losers bracket, eliminating Mongami, Chisato, Rivera, Cultura, Pangilinan, and Mendoza to face Soriano for first place. Soriano eliminated Villanueva in the first game of their championship showdown.

Mendoza had a "coulda, shoulda, woulda" third place, with his losses to Soriano and Villanueva coming after mistakes in games he had un-

der control.

With the holidays ending, USSP is returning to its normal tournament schedule: 8-ball on Mondays and 9-ball on Tuesdays. The 8-ball tournament is double elimination with a \$5 entry fee. The entry is \$10 for Tuesday's single elimination (race-to-three) 9-ball tilt.

For more information, please call Rose or Ken Phillips at 233-1984. (USSP)

Pelisamen led Ghasias Brothers' juiced-out victory with his 26 points. He had eight kees, two aces, and two goals.

In the second semis match, the Fanians recovered from an opening set loss en route to denying Evenflow a return trip to the finals.

Evenflow boosted its title defense bid when it took the first set, 25-16. But the Fanians swept the last three sets to book the second finals ticket.

The Fanians started their recovery with a close 25-20 win in the second set. They picked up where they left off

in the third set with a 25-16 victory and wrapped up the match with a 25-11 win in the fourth set.

Evenflow, which won last season's championship against No-Use, faltered in its bid for back-to-back finals appearances despite scoring more goals than the Fanians, 5-2.

Tito Francisco paced Evenflow with 13 points on two aces, three kees, and a goal.

The Fanians-Ghasias Brothers' championship showdown will begin tonight. It will be a best-of-three title series.

ROAD

From Page 28

Daniel, and John Auther, and Tom Linden); Team Rojo (Wolf Mojica, Pete Vilagas, Shogo Ando, Stan Good, and Alex Racoma);

Harumi's Team (Jon Ada, Allen Moses, Hamuri, Joomi, Bany); Zoo Crew (Tyce, Angie, and Logan Mister, Derek and

JERRY

From Page 28

ond and first place winners of USSP's Monday "warm-up" tournament. Watanabe ran the table to the eight on Chester Hamoy before putting that game away.

Taitano was swimming with the sharks, avoiding Senen Pangilinan and Primo Rivera before being bitten

Cole Chambers); Team Rule 5 (Patrick and Angie Maanao, Andrew Ozawa, Robert Naraja, and George David); and La Tormenta de Nieve (Wayne, Brian, and Mary Ellyn Martin, and Mike Blasberg).

The Colts and Zoo Crew were lauded by the crowd when they crossed the finish line with the teams' 10-and-under runners. Daniel and John Auther of the Colts and Zoo Crew's Logan

by Soriano. Chisato had sent Bernard Kileleman to the losers bracket.

Kileleman came back to eliminate Manucdoc, but couldn't get past Gomez. Pangilinan avenged his first-game loss rolling to victories over Franz De Luna, Watanabe, Gomez, and Taitano in a rematch.

Kapileo beat Hamoy, but couldn't get past Rivera. It didn't matter, as Villanueva

give Okies the win and the finals slot.

But the Okies were not up for the big challenge, as Ghasias Brothers put an end to the former's upset bid with a 26-18 win in the fourth set.

It was a sweet revenge for Ghasias Brothers, who absorbed their first loss of the season at the hands of Okies. Besides owning the bragging rights of handing Ghasias Brothers their first defeat this year, the Okies were also the lone team to skunk a set against the former. A skunk in roball terms is a shutout win.

A 19-point victory in the fourth set would automatically

recovered from his early loss and marched through the losers bracket, eliminating Mongami, Chisato, Rivera, Cultura, Pangilinan, and Mendoza to face Soriano for first place. Soriano eliminated Villanueva in the first game of their championship showdown.

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BROTHERS

From Page 28

The Freddie Pelisamen-led Ghasias Brother took early control of the match sweeping the first two sets, 31-19, 27-15.

Behind by 24 points, 34-58, the Okies got their acts together in the third set and eked out a 26-20 triumph. Still the Okies were trailing, 60-78, and must win the fourth set to extend the game.

A 19-point victory in the fourth set would automatically

in the third set with a 25-16 victory and wrapped up the match with a 25-11 win in the fourth set.

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Baguio suits up for Air21

PBA MANILA, Philip-pines—He

was supposed to be on vacation by now, probably smelling the pines up north or getting a tan down south to celebrate the long holiday break.

Instead, Cyrus Baguio will be donning the colors of Air21 today, and—depending on the result—for maybe a little longer in the KFC-PBA Philippine Cup as the Express try to survive the wild-card phase today at the Big Dome.

The trade involving Baguio and Celino Cruz for Air21's first round picks in the 2011 and 2012 Drafts was approved yesterday after commissioner Sonny Barrios got an assurance from both teams that they will continue to uphold the league's rules, particularly those concerning the salary cap.

Meanwhile, sources said yesterday Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao is set to tender his resignation as Barako coach soon, ending what has been a successful partnership with the Photokina franchise.

Guiao's resignation will free up more time for him to focus

on the national team, where he is head coach.

Guiao has mounted a successful PBA campaign with the Barako, winning several titles despite a roster decimated by one-sided trades.

Red Bull, over the years, has lost several stars due to these trades, including Baguio, who tries to help Air21 in its 6 p.m. game against Purefoods.

The Express haven't beaten the Giants in two meetings this season.

Coca-Cola and San Miguel play a similar knockout game at 4 p.m.

Cruz, according to Air21 team manager Lito Alvarez, is still in Cebu to attend the funeral of his grandmother.

"If we get lucky (against Purefoods), Celino can start playing (for us) on Jan. 4," said Alvarez, who confirmed that Baguio, who was traded as Red Bull's leading scorer with 18 points a game, was able to squeeze in two practices for the Express.

A wild card is awarded to the sixth-to-ninth-ranked teams after 18 elimination round games. (PDI)

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	27	4	.871	_
New Jersey	15	15	.500	11 1/2
Philadelphia	12	17	.414	14
Toronto	12	17	.414	14
New York	11	17	.393	14 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	24	6	.800	_
Atlanta	19	10	.655	4 1/2
Miami	16	12	.571	7
Charlotte	11	20	.355	13 1/2
Washington	5	23	.179	18

Central Division

Cleveland	25	4	.862	_
Detroit	17	11	.607	7 1/2
Milwaukee	14	17	.452	12
Chicago	13	17	.433	12 1/2
Indiana	10	19	.345	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	20	10	.667	_

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The Week in Sports

Athletes receive holiday gifts

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roelyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI junior tennis players Thea Minor and Christian unwrapped presents for themselves and their supportive parents in the morning of Christmas Eve.

The gifts were seven medals, which were the fruits of Minor and Miller's hardwork in New Zealand.

The two CNMI netters, along with Rafael Jones, were in New Zealand for about three weeks and returned on Dec. 24 in time for the holiday celebration.

When they arrived at the Francisco C. Ada International Airport, Minor showed her proud parents her three gold medals and three silver, while Miller removed from his tennis bag two runnerup medals.

Minor won in the doubles event in Waikato, Poverty Bay, and Auckland. She also had runnerup finishes in another doubles event in Waikato and in singles competitions in Auckland and Poverty Bay.

Miller placed second in doubles in Poverty Bay and Waikato.

Also receiving holiday presents were the Docomo Krystal Hustlers, Primo's Home Boys, and Daniel.

The Hustlers and the Home Boys won the championship in the Agingan and Obyan division of the Saipan Billiards Association Bud Cup, respectively.

Daniel also brought home a championship trophy after ruling the CIM-FCC Inter-Color Basketball League-3rd Genesis Cup.

Daniel claimed the title following its 92-76 triumph over Isaiah in the winner-take-all finals played at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

In the spirit of gift giving, the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association donated equipment package to three public high schools on Saipan.

Kagman High School, Saipan Southern High School, and Marianas High School received 20 pieces of size 5 soccer balls, two pieces of ball bags, seven pairs of shin guards, a ball pump, six needles, and a pair of gloves.

The equipment will help the three schools prepare for next month's interscholastic league.

Three teams left Saipan not to celebrate the holiday season elsewhere, but to compete in tournaments in Guam.

Saipan Swim Club's Grace and Andrew Kimball, Emma and Abigail Martinsen, Blair Nicholls, Michael Moran, Lester Lapuz, and Victoria Chentsova, and Tsunami Saipan's Rezne Wong, Kai Staal, Kensuke and Shin Kimura, and Marystar Welch are participating in the Guam International Swim Meet at the Hagatna Swimming Pool,

Over at the Rick Ninete Tennis Center, 12 CNMI junior players are competing in the 2008 Guam Junior Championships. The list include Ilia Corella, Cody and Gabrielle Race, Chris Cajigan, Jodel Fernandez, John Cano, Tammy and Dylan Ackerman, Neghar Rastguyi, Amy Arenovski, and Kennedy Izuka.

Back on local soil, the semifinals cast in the 2008-2009 World Organized Rocball Community League was completed last week.

Making it to the Final Four were the Okies, Ghasias Brothers, Evenflow, and Fanians.

The semis pairings are Ghasias Brothers vs. Okies and the Fanians against Evenflow. The semifinals matches are a one-game only affair with the winners advancing to a best-of-three title series. The semis and title games are a race to 25 points per set.



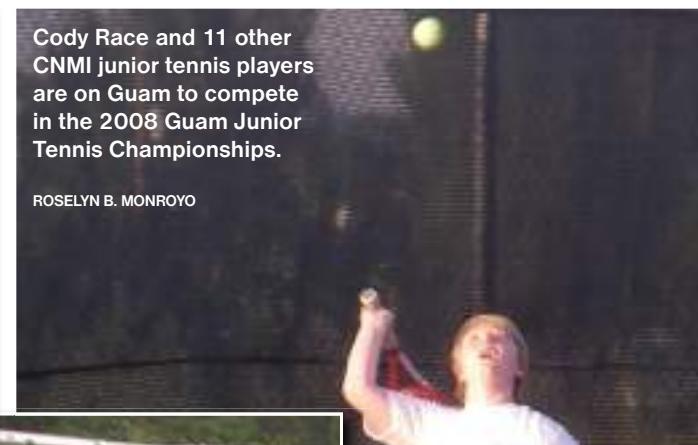
ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Thea Minor shows the six medals she won in New Zealand.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Christian Miller poses for Saipan Tribune at the arrival area of the Francisco C. Ada International Airport.



Michael Moran and his SSC teammates are in Guam for a weekend swim meet.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Cody Race and 11 other CNMI junior tennis players are on Guam to compete in the 2008 Guam Junior Tennis Championships.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Tsunami Saipan's Kai Staal plunges into the pool during last month's All Schools meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
An Okies player leaps for a shot during a second round match in the Rocball league at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Daniel's Darwin Barbo pulls up for a shot against Isaiah defenders during their title game in the 3rd Genesis Cup at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Senen Pangilinan of the Docomo Krystal Hustlers in action during their game against Godfather's Rock Steady in the Agingan Division of the SBA Bud Cup.

Randy Johnson signs one-year deal with Giants

24

With two recent back surgeries behind him, Randy Johnson is refreshed and focused on being a baseball player again this winter.

Saipan Tribune Sports

28 MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2008

Athletes receive holiday gifts

CNMI junior tennis players Thea Minor and Christian unwrapped presents for themselves and their supportive parents in the morning of Christmas Eve.

27



SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Road Rulers show way in Island Relay



From left, Yvonne Bennett, Champ Untalan, Matt Mancao, Nate Mateo, and Robin Sapong of the Road Rulers near the finish line of the 2008 Annual Christmas Island Relay at the Last Command Post in Marpi Saturday.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Road Rulers lived up to their name topping the 2008 Christmas Island Relay Saturday.

The winning team was composed of Champ Untalan, Matt Mancao, Nate Mateo, Robin Sapong, and Yvonne Bennett and finished the 13.7-mile race in one hour, 30 minutes, 41 seconds.

The Road Rulers' time eclipsed the

1:33:04 set by 2007 champion We Are Legends, who incidentally were led by Mateo and Mancao.

Mancao anchored the Road Rulers sprinting from the starting line at the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio, while Bennett finished the race at the Last Command Post in Marpi.

Finishing second were the Saipan Cyclers, who timed in at 1:34.38, and were composed of Florence Antonio, Butch Sublemente,

Ronald Villafria, Cesar Danao, and Rene Calage.

In third place was Team Docomo (James Lee, Jerry Diaz, Pete Mendiola, Joe Villacrusis, and Yvette Bennett) with a time of 1:42:24.

Other finishers placing fourth to 10th were Code Blue (Michael Thomas, Divya Sharma, Bruce Berline, and Laura Shevy); the Colts (Joe, Carol,

See ROAD on Page 26



Jerry jingles all the way in Christmas 8-ball



Jerry Soriano eyes his target during the USS Peleliu's Christmas 8-Ball Tournament Tuesday night.



Christmas came early for Jerry Soriano last Dec. 23 with the championship of USS Peleliu's Christmas 8-Ball Tournament.

The other 15 players had flashier games, but his patience and consistency paid off for the \$240 first-place money. Rolly Villanueva got \$75 for second place and Juancho Mendoza won \$45 for third.

The winners also got trophies courtesy of Pacific Amusement and Christmas packages from USSP. Most of the players also took home raffle gifts from USSP. Pacific Trading Co. provided other raffle prizes for Miller product drinkers.

Soriano sailed through the night without a loss, topping Ed Manucdoc, Ron Chisato, Patrick Taitano, and Mendoza in the winners bracket.

Mendoza got by John Mongami, Erwin Gomez, and Nolan Cultura before taking his first loss. Gomez had sent Villanueva to the losers bracket in an early showdown, while Cultura had to defeat Simeon Kapileo and Taylor Watanabe, the sec-

See JERRY on Page 26



Jack Kabiriel



Noriko Jim

Brothers, Fanians set title duel in Rocball league

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REPORTER



Ghasias Brothers and the Fanians arranged their title showdown in the 2008-2009 World Organized Rocball Community League after recording juiced-out semis wins Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Ghasias Brothers whipped the Okies in the first semifinals game, 104-78, while the Fanians secured the second finals ticket after a 91-72 triumph over deposed champion Evenflow.

See BROTHERS on Page 26



A Ghasias Brothers player knocks off a kee during their semis game against the Okies in the Rocball league Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

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